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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 66/NO. 19 MAY 13, 2002

INSIDE

Captured spy ship is emblem of sovereignty in north Korea

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Chocolate workers walk out at Hershey's

BY GEORGE CHALMERS

· HERSHEY, Pennsylvania—Workers at two of Hershey Foods' largest plants walked off the job April 26 and rallied along East Chocolate Avenue in front of the plant along with hundreds of cheering co-workers from other shifts. They held up signs reading, "The sweetest place on earth went sour," "Stop the Greed, Share the Wealth," and "Local 464 on Strike." The unionists also erected a giant inflatable rat and christened it "Lenny," in reference to the company's Chief Executive Officer Richard Lenny.

Hershey Foods Corp., the nation's largest candy maker, is demanding that workers accept an increase in co-payments in health insurance benefits. This is the first strike in 22 years at the 108-year-old company.

The 2,700 members of Chocolate Workers Local 464 have been working without a contract since November. The two plants, as well as the nonunion Reese's plant, make chocolate bars, Hershey's Kisses, and chocolate eggs, which are also produced at 12 other plants owned by the company.

Workers are fighting a company drive to increase the amount union members pay on health insurance premiums from 6 to 12 percent over the course of a four-year contract. This would wipe out proposed wage increases amounting to around 2.6 percent a year. On April 23 union members voted by a 7 to 1 margin to reject these concession demands.

"It makes us feel good that the public is

Continued on Page 4

Vote in France deepens crisis of bourgeois parties

BY GREG McCARTAN

The vote for Jean-Marie Le Pen, an ultrarightist who came in second in the first round of voting for president of France, has deepened the crisis of the bourgeois parties in the country. The capitalist Gaullist party of President Jacques Chirac and the social democratic party of former prime minister Lionel Jospin are more and more seen by working people as co-responsible for the antilabor offensive at home. Offering no solutions to the economic hardships millions face on a daily basis, they face collapse.

In 1997 the Gaullists were heavily defeated at the polls after mass working-class mobilizations defeated plans under the hated Alain Juppé to carry through wide-ranging austerity measures. Socialist Party leader Jospin was swept into power, promising to bring down unemployment and attend to the needs of working people. Now Jospin has met a similar fate as his predecessor, pushed out of office after millions of workers and farmers, fed up with continued assaults under the "co-habitation" of the two major parties, either stayed away from the polls or voted for right-wing outfits or small centrist parties.

In the first round of voting for president, the ultrarightist candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen edged out Jospin for a place in the second-round runoff by a margin of 195,000 votes. Le Pen received 16.86 percent of the total vote to Jospin's 16.18 percent. With Jospin eliminated, Le Pen will face the Gaullist Chirac in the second round on May 5.

The massive defections from the main capitalist parties led to the conservatives losing a total of 4.5 million votes, while Jospin lost close to 2.5 million compared with the last presidential election in 1995. Some 28 percent of voters stayed away, the highest level of abstention in French history in a national vote. Chirac came out ahead with just under 20 percent of the vote, the

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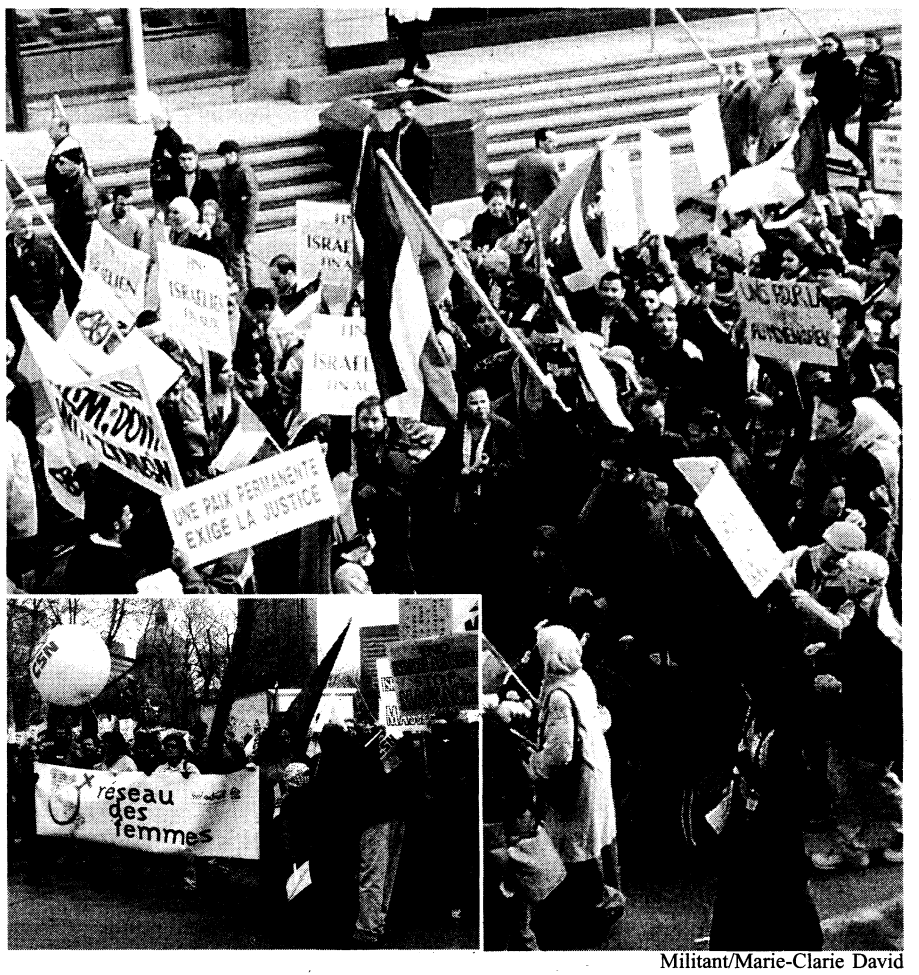
Thousands march in Montreal to support Palestinian struggle



Militant/Marie-Clarie David

Above, demonstration of more than 7,500 in Montreal. In South Africa some 10,000 people participated in a rally April 21. Other actions have occurred throughout the Mideast, Europe, and the United States. See articles on pages 10 and 11.

May Day actions in U.S. demand equal rights for immigrants

BY JANICE LYNN

WASHINGTON—Chanting in Spanish, "What do we want? Amnesty! When do we want it? Now!" more than 200 people gathered in the Upper Senate Park, adjacent to the Capitol here, for a rally for immigrant rights.

The May 1 action, sponsored by the National Legalization Movement, called for "Labor Rights for all Workers" and "Legalization for all Undocumented Immigrants."

Abel Rubio, who works construction jobs and in the tobacco fields, was part of an 11-person delegation from Dudley, North Carolina, that carried the red flags of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC). This was Rubio's first rally. "The more people who come out to things like this, the better our chance for legalization," Rubio said.

"We hope all workers in this country will fight for their rights and not kneel down," stated Julio González, who came from New York for the rally. Originally from Guatemala, González told the *Militant*, "We have come to work. We are human beings and deserve the same respect as anyone else."

Twenty-one-year-old Roxana Zuniga, a student from Rochester Hills, Michigan, came to Washington because "every human

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Workers in New York respond to first steps by mayor toward imposing massive cuts

BY JACK WILLEY AND LAURA ANDERSON

NEW YORK—A number of struggles by union members and workers are breaking out here as Mayor Michael Bloomberg is preparing massive cuts to the city's budget that will have a devastating impact on working people.

More than 5,000 transit workers rallied in midtown Manhattan April 24 to defend health-care benefits that the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) has threatened to take away. The rally was organized outside MTA headquarters by Transport Workers Union Local 100, which represents 34,000 workers who operate and maintain the city subways and bus lines. Under the last union contract, the transit authority promised improvements in health care. It has since underfunded the health plan and the debt-ridden plan is near bankruptcy.

Roger Toussaint, president of TWU Local 100, told the crowd that the MTA should "cut from the bosses, not the folks who move several million people every day."

Workers in blue union jackets and hats took up half of Third Avenue for a number of blocks as union officials and supporters of their fight addressed the crowd. The city

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'Militant' asks working people to contribute to six-week fund drive

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

NEW YORK—The *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* have launched a six-week drive to raise funds for the two socialist periodicals and are encouraging working people, youth, and working farmers to make a contribution to make it possible to continue to publish a socialist weekly paper in English and monthly magazine in Spanish.

Supporters of the two publications can organize contributions to the drive alongside the international subscription campaign. The *Militant* and *PM* are producing a flyer to use at street tables, on the job, and with subscribers to the paper to solicit funds.

In the first two weeks of the subscription drive, working people and young fighters have shown a keen interest in the news articles and editorials telling the truth about the imperialist war on working people at home and abroad, why the Israeli state must be overthrown and replaced with a democratic and secular Palestine, and the need to chart a course of independent working-class political action against the bosses and their governments in order to begin to take on and confront the deepening crisis of capitalism.

Socialist workers and young socialists selling the two periodicals over the past weeks report new readers are attracted by the international breadth of the paper's coverage. Just in this issue there are datelines

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Chávez assures Venezuelan rulers he will 'make changes'

BY RÓGER CALERO

After being returned to power by a massive working-class mobilization April 13, Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez has taken a conciliatory stance towards the capitalist class and military that removed him in an April 11 U.S.-backed coup.

"Many people tell me—and they are right," Chávez said in a speech April 28, "don't forget that you are the president of all Venezuelans, of the upper class, the middle class, the lower class." He promised to "make changes, and I'm starting with my economic team, revising economic policies."

The president announced the removal of Diosdado Cabello as vice president and the appointment of Defense Minister José Vicente Rangel to the post as a first step in complying with demands by the Venezuelan ruling class to change his cabinet and a number of laws adopted over the last year.

Following the defeat of the reactionary coup, Chávez appointed Rangel to meet with representatives of the opposition, including representatives of the country's main bosses's association, Fedecámaras, and officials from the Venezuelan Workers Federation (CTV), the main labor union federation.

CTV officials have restated their support for a demand by opposition political parties for a referendum to "accelerate" Chávez's exit from the presidency. By calling for general strikes and denouncing policies of the regime, the union officials played a key role in giving popular cover to the bosses's reactionary drive against the Chávez government.

Leading congressmen in Venezuela's National Assembly, which is controlled by Chávez supporters, said they would act to change at least 17 of 49 laws passed last year which raised the hackles of the wealthy landlords and capitalists in the country, as well as of the U.S. imperialists.

One person identified as a "leading industrialist" by the *New York Times* said, "We have no choice but to give Chávez the benefit of the doubt right now. The question that remains is whether he is willing to redefine his revolution or not. We need to see actions, not words."

Backs off appointments to oil company

From the moment he regained power Chávez backed off his appointment of a new president and seven new members to the executive board at Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA). The bosses at PDVSA opposed Chávez's appointments and a law aimed at getting more of the income for oil sales into the state treasury, calling these moves a threat to the "independence" of the state-owned company.

After announcing his appointees had resigned, Chávez gave the presidency to Alí Rodríguez, the secretary general of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and someone considered an acceptable candidate by the bosses.

Although Venezuela nationalized its oil industry in the 1970s, steps to bring the industry under complete state control have never been carried out. When the operations of Royal Dutch/Shell and other foreign companies were made state property, the new company, Petróleos de Venezuela, left the entire structure of the imperialist-owned operations in the hands of the same bosses.

With 40,000 employees and $50 billion a year in sales, oil sales by PDVSA provide 80 percent of Venezuela's export revenue.

The privileges and wealth that come with the positions help show why any moves to make the oil bosses accountable run into stiff resistance. For example, PDVSA's president is believed to make up to $20,000 a month, a salary 10 times that of the minister of mines and energy who is supposed to be his superior.

Executives and top functionaries at the company also have access to chalets in the Andes that are maintained at PDSV's expense with small contributions from the bosses' salaries. The bosses make sure that the company, which is the third largest supplier of oil to the United States and owns Citco's refineries and 13,000 gas stations, continues to be organized from the wellhead to the gas pump to meet the needs of the U.S. rulers rather than the interests of working people in Venezuela.

Washington tries to cover its tracks

Since the coup, U.S. government officials and the big business press have been working to cover Washington's tracks in connection with the military coup.

Rear Adm. Carlos Molina told the press, however, that despite U.S. denials, he believed he was acting with the support of the U.S. government when he helped lead the coup. The Pentagon has acknowledged having held meetings with Venezuelan generals in the months leading up to the coup. Among those who met with Pentagon officials was Gen. Lucas Romero Rincón, Venezuela's chief of the high military command who announced Chávez's "resignation" in the early hours of the coup. Among the U.S. officials who met with General Rincón was Rogelio Pardo-Maurer, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for Western Hemisphere affairs, and Gen. Peter Pace, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Contrary to statements made by U.S. State Department officials, denying the presence of U.S. military personnel at the Fort Tiuna military base during Chávez's detention, Venezuelan government officials have asserted that two military officers were present at the base with high-ranking Venezuelan officers until it became evident that the coup had failed. State Department officials claim that the two U.S. officers drove near the base but never got out of their vehicle.

The State Department says it is carrying out an investigation into the propriety of the actions of the National Endowment for Democracy, an agency created and financed by the U.S. Congress, in handing funds to groups that participated in the coup. The press has maintained silence over the extent of CIA involvement in the events.

Class divide

The coup and working-class mobilizations against it helped bring to light the deep class divisions in Venezuela, a country of 24 million people. Despite the country's vast economic resources, 80 percent of its population live under the official poverty line, with half the workforce unemployed or underemployed.

"All of them are oligarchs," Ramón Rodríguez said of the coup leaders. Rodríguez, a street vendor in the Catia neighborhood in Caracas, added, "Couldn't they have appointed one person like us? The rich people underestimated us. We are committed to him [Chávez] because he is committed to us."

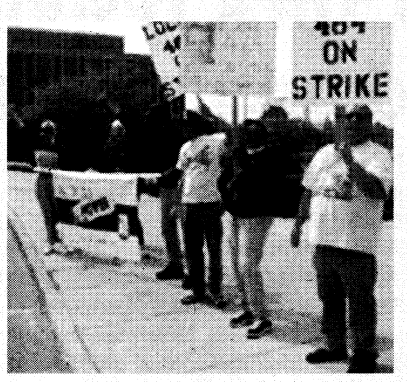
The Spanish daily *El País* reported that during the working-class mobilizations against the coup, demonstrators went out in the streets, yelling, "The same thieves are back," and "the cream of the crop is back," mobilizing others to join the actions and showing their class hatred towards the capitalist elite.

The deep racial divisions that exist in Venezuela are a dominant feature of politics there. Economic and political power is concentrated in the hands of the capitalist class, which is white. Some 67 percent of Venezuela's population is mestizo, 10 percent are Black, and 2 percent are indigenous.

THE MILITANT

Keep up with workers' resistance today

Chocolate workers on strike in Pennsylvania. Transit workers and teachers protests, along with a clerical workers walkout in New York. Cablemakers in New Zealand and naval base workers in Scotland. Anti-police brutality protests from Washington State to New Jersey. Just in this issue.



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Cops kill worker having epileptic seizure

BY NAOMI CRAINE

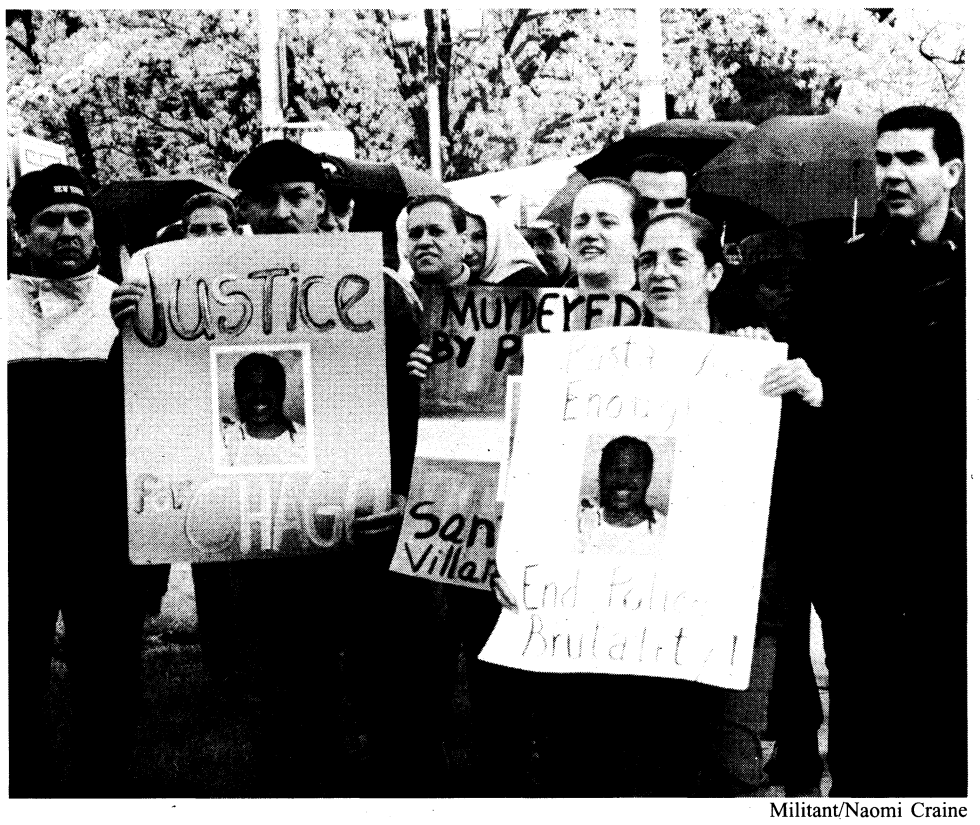
BLOOMFIELD, New Jersey—"Bloomfield police, you can't hide, what you did was a racist crime," chanted some 75 people who picketed the municipal building here at midday April 25. The demonstration was called to protest the police killing of Santiago Villanueva, a garment worker originally from the Dominican Republic.

The majority of the demonstrators came on a chartered bus from the Washington Heights neighborhood in New York City, where Villanueva lived. Among them was Homero Palacio, who said, "Every time the cops commit a racist crime the community has to respond." He noted that while the cops were assaulting Villanueva "everyone was explaining he had epilepsy. It's the same word in English and Spanish."

On April 16 Villanueva suffered an epileptic seizure while working at the Quick Cut garment plant in Bloomfield. The police arrived before the paramedics. According to co-workers and the factory owner, who saw what happened, the four cops insisted Villanueva was on drugs, threw him to the floor face down, handcuffed him, and jammed their knees into his head, neck, and back.

They kept Villanueva handcuffed when he was put in an ambulance. He was dead within half an hour. An autopsy found the cause of death to be "mechanical asphyxia"—that is physical pressure that stopped him from breathing.

"I need to see these people indicted," said Lisaann Villanueva, Santiago's wife, in an interview. "There's no room for police officers like this. They need to be taken off duty before they hurt someone else." She added, "How could this happen at a man's place of work?" and noted it would likely not have happened if he wasn't Black.



Militant/Naomi Craine

Protesters picket April 25 at municipal building in Bloomfield, New Jersey, demanding justice for Santiago Villanueva, who was assaulted at work by cops. They ignored pleas from his co-workers telling them Villanueva was an epileptic. He died a half hour later.

A musician and teacher

Villanueva, 35, was known by many in Washington Heights as a musician and volunteer teacher of Dominican folk dancing. More than 100 people rallied at a public school in New York April 23 to plan the protest in Bloomfield. Among them were Margarita Rosario and Iris Baez, both longtime fighters against police brutality whose sons were killed by the New York cops in the mid-1990s. Villanueva "was treated like a criminal like my son was treated like a criminal" by the police, Rosario told the crowd.

Maurice Williams, the Socialist Workers Party's candidate for mayor in Newark, New Jersey, attended the rally and expressed his support for the fight. "We need to demand that the killer cops be jailed," he said, to applause and chants.

The April 25 picket at the Bloomfield municipal building was lively and loud, despite a steady rain. Juanita Young from New York City said, "My son was killed by the police on March 1, 2000. He was shot point blank in the head.

The medical examiner ruled that his death was homicide. He was killed less than a week after the New York cops were acquitted for killing Amadou Diallo." Ferguson, a 23-year-old Black man, had been charged with resisting arrest the previous week at a protest of the acquittals of the four cops who gunned down Diallo.

Young said she came to the protest in Bloomfield because "they are killing all these young men or putting them in prison. They say things are getting better but they are not, they are getting worse. There have been five killings by the cops in the past six months. The police have been harassing my family because I go to these protests." She said a week or so ago the cops came to her home with the wallet of her dead son.

Other police brutality cases

Nabeelah Abdul-Ghafur, who is active in the North End Coalition, a community group in Bloomfield, was among the first to arrive for the protest. She said residents in the Black community have been seeking justice in another case, where police officer Joseph Krantz injured five children while supposedly shooting at a dog. This happened in 1999, and "he didn't miss a pay check. There's a lot of complaints against the cops in Bloomfield, but we can't get access to the records," she said.

Claudio Garcia, a Dominican youth who is in a work training program, said he'd been to other protests against police brutality but this was the first one in New Jersey. "The police figured they were the bosses in the situation. He [Villanueva] was sick and they started arresting him. The cops think they rule the world."

Several Black ministers held a news conference in Bloomfield April 26, where they called for a thorough investigation into Villanueva's death, and said the cops should have better medical training. In response, Bloomfield Police Chief Jack McNiff defended the actions of the officers and assured reporters that two of the cops involved were trained as emergency medical technicians.

Meanwhile, the protests are continuing. More than 100 people joined in celebrating Villanueva's life and protesting his death in Washington Heights April 28. Several musicians who had played with him in various bands provided music, including a song in Spanish with the refrain, "Yes, it was the cops who killed him."

Nina Paulino, who had known Villanueva since he moved to New York from the Dominican Republic nine years ago, spoke briefly about the fight. She said that the Bloomfield authorities have thus far refused to release his body so that it can be flown to his native land for a proper burial. She urged everyone to come to Bloomfield for another protest at the municipal building the following week.

Congress proposes new agencies to deepen assault on immigrant workers

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a move aimed at strengthening the federal immigration police, the House of Representatives voted 405-9 on April 25 to abolish the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and replace it with two new agencies.

One is couched as an "immigrant services" bureau and will supposedly be more responsive to "legitimate" requests by immigrants for legal residence, for citizenship, and around other legal matters. For working people this part of the INS is today simply a hopeless bureaucracy, years behind in processing even the simplest documents.

The other will be responsible for the traditional role of the hated *la migra*, such as victimizing workers already in the United States through immigration raids, roundups on the border, and jailings of individuals—called "enforcement" by officials in Washington and something the agency is already quite efficient at.

Under the House bill both bureaus would report to a new associate attorney general for immigration affairs at the Justice Department.

Reversing its stance, the Bush administration, which had opposed this bipartisan bill up until two days before passage, has now announced its backing for it.

The Senate is expected to vote on a similar bill that would also break the INS into two bureaus, but place them within a new organization "similar to the Federal Bureau of Investigation," noted the *New York Times*.

Also under discussion is a proposal put forward by Thomas Ridge, the director of homeland security, who wants to create a new border cop agency that would take over the police operations of the INS, Customs Service, and Coast Guard.

Since passage of the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act under the Clinton administration, the INS has been built into the largest federal police force with 15,000 officers carrying weapons and authorized to make arrests. The agency currently has 37,000 employees and an annual budget of $6.2 billion.

In proposals presented to Congress in February, President George Bush is seeking an increase of $1.2 billion in the next fiscal year for INS operations. Funds would be used to double the number of border patrol cops and develop a massive computer monitoring system to keep tabs on the movement of the 330 million noncitizens who enter the United States each year.

Since September 11 the INS has indefinitely detained hundreds of individuals who were rounded up for overstaying their visa, and have not been charged with any crime.

In early April, the INS announced several additional steps to restrict immigrants' rights. Most tourist visas will now be good for only 30 days, down from six months. Undocumented workers who have been ordered to turn themselves in to the INS as part of a deportation process must now do so within 30 days or lose their ability to apply for legal status for 10 years. In addition, individuals planning to study in the United States will only be able to receive student status if they notify the agency about their study plans prior to entering the United States. The INS has also started up a computerized database to track the estimated 500,000 people who travel to the United States on student visas.

The Justice Department has drafted a legal opinion that would expand the operations of state and local police agencies to include the enforcement of immigration laws, something they are currently prohibited from doing. A pilot program along these lines in which cops not only help INS agents with logistics but actually carry out immigration raids is already in effect in Florida and South Carolina.

Rulers in Europe threaten tariffs on U.S. products

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Trade tensions are on the rise as European Union–member (EU) governments ready retaliatory sanctions in response to Washington's decision in March to impose up to 30 percent tariffs on imported steel.

Plans under consideration by the European Commission include wide-ranging sanctions in the form of 100 percent tariffs on selected imports from the United States, worth about $300 million annually, which would start on June 18. Items on the list that could be targeted include fruit, textiles, steel products, and firearms. To go into effect this proposal needs to receive majority backing from the 15 EU-member states.

In a speech in New York in mid-April, Gordon Brown, the United Kingdom chancellor, called upon Washington to drop these tariffs as a step toward breaking down trade barriers with the EU. Some other EU states, reports the *Financial Times*, such as Germany and the Nordic countries, have expressed concern about the implications of the commission's planned retaliatory actions.

The European Commission is demanding that Washington compensate EU countries for lost steel sales resulting from the U.S. trade restrictions. It has drawn up an even broader list of $2.1 billion worth of U.S. exports upon which retaliatory sanctions can be imposed, if the World Trade Organization rules against Washington's steel tariff. A decision in this case, however, is not expected until at least mid-2003.

In an interview with the *Financial Times,* Pascal Lamy, the EU trade commissioner, lashed out at the U.S. steel tariffs. "There is no way it cannot be seen in Europe as 'You can go to hell,'" he said.

On the top of the list for possible retaliatory duties is the $600 million worth of steel products exported to European Union countries by the United States. The EU has also set up trade barriers of its own, in the form of quotas and tariffs on steel imports that it says are needed to protect the European market from a rise in imports now barred from the U.S. market.

Washington for its part has condemned the EU-member nations for threatening to take prompt countermeasures to its steel tariff. "Legal disputes have to be resolved in the dispute settlement process in the WTO," opined an unnamed U.S. trade official quoted by the *Financial Times*. "The EU wants to be the judge and jury. This strikes at the heart of the multilateral process."

One U.S. official told the paper that the EU moves represent a "unilateral escalation by assuming the roles of contestant, judge, and jury," adding that if "countries start to go down the path of retaliating without waiting for a WTO decision, we will have that option too."

A number of other governments, including in Japan, south Korea, and China, have condemned the U.S. steel tariffs, and are considering joining the EU in filing a complaint before the WTO. Tokyo, like the EU, is seeking $160 million in compensation from Washington.

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Unionists in N.Y. protest as mayor plans massive cuts

Continued from front page
government mobilized hundreds of cops for the action, surrounding the protest with a wall of blue uniforms.

A week later thousands of public school teachers demonstrated May 1 to demand a contract with a pay increase and the hiring of more teachers. They were joined by students and parents who support the teachers' fight. United Federation of Teachers (UFT) members have worked without a contract since November 2000. They are demanding a pay increase that brings their salary closer to teachers in the suburban schools. Several rally participants also pointed out that thousands of teachers are retiring and class sizes are growing. UFT members will take a strike vote on May 7.

The protests by transit workers and teachers are part of a series of actions by public employees against layoffs and attacks on their social wage.

The up-tick in workers' resistance comes as New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg plans to slash jobs, squeeze concessions from the trade unions, and cut social services in the city. Bloomberg presented a proposed budget in February, which projected receiving funds from the state and federal governments and winning deep concessions from the city's public employees' unions. On April 17, he announced a "contingency plan" with further proposed measures.

Bloomberg's "contingency plan" calls for eliminating the Emergency Food Assistance Program, which distributes food through homeless shelters and food banks, closing 15 senior citizen centers, eliminating medical services in homeless shelters, scaling back garbage pickups, eliminating some youth programs, and cutting a further $115 million in education. The mayor also plans to raise the cigarette tax by an additional $1.42 per pack.

Bloomberg's original budget proposal called for a total of $500 million in cuts to pensions and other benefits from the public employees unions.

The mayor has warned union members to accept the cuts, saying, "The alternatives are contingency cuts, and the contingency cuts include layoffs." His "contingency" calls for putting 2,600 positions on the chopping block and making an additional $64.9 million in unspecified "head count cuts."

Bloomberg, who was a Democrat but ran as a Republican, is making his anti-worker proposals with a lack of vindictiveness or a partisan edge, and with the cool efficiency of a chief financial officer of a corporation. And the proposals have run into little resistance so far from Democrats on the city council.

Clerical workers, immigrants fight back

As public workers stand up to oppose the mayor's proposed budget cuts, other working people have also turned to the streets.

On April 30, hundreds marched to the mayor's office demanding approval of INTRO 38, city legislation that would require social service agencies to provide translators for immigrant workers applying for unemployment benefits or financial aid. The marchers also called for access to health services, housing, education, and employment.

One marcher carried a sign that read: "Bloomberg, we demand equality."

Another, Nilda Morales, from *Se Hace Camino al Andar*, said that immigrants' "rights are not being respected—they are being abused, deported, and even blamed for what happened on September 11."

Since mid-April, 1,172 clerical workers across the city have been on strike against Group Health Incorporated (GHI).

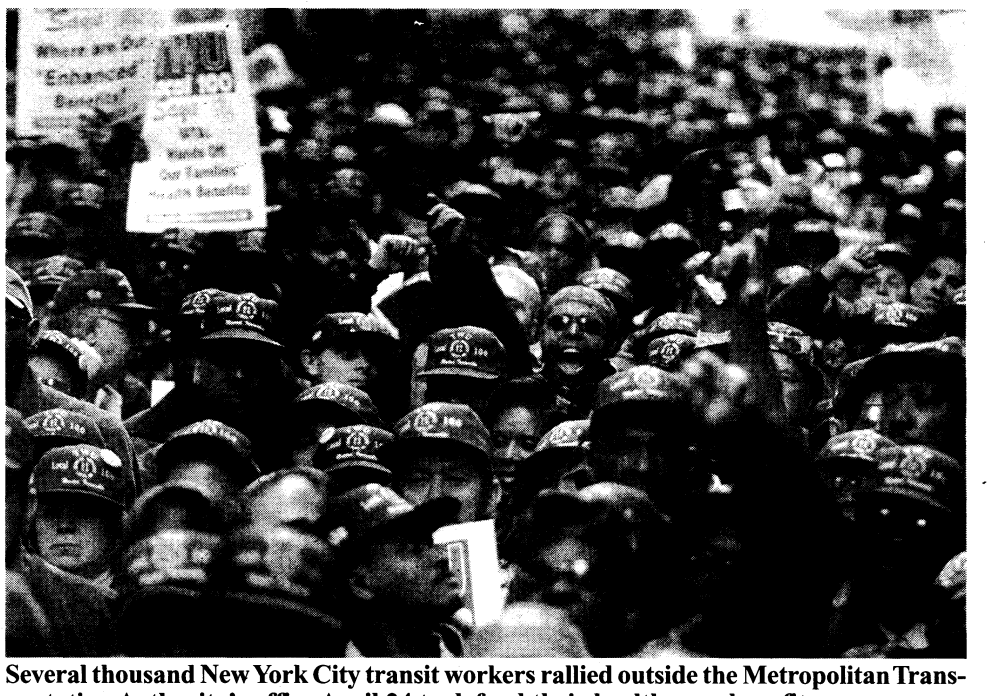
"We are clerical workers, our job is to provide benefits for unionized workers, and here we are fighting to keep our own," said Willie Fiallo, a member of the Office and Professional Employees International Union Local 153, on strike at the company.

The company wants to roll back health-care and pension benefits—the same benefits that workers at GHI dispense to union members and those receiving Medicare. Fiallo, with 33 years at GHI, said that one of the benefits the bosses want to cut is the week's leave of absence that employees receive when a family member dies.

Annie Randall said many picketers fought a company lockout in 1976 and are once again determined to beat back the company demands.

Sanitation workers, Con Edison workers, teachers, and Teamsters Local 100 have offered support to the strikers.

Arrin Hawkins, Sarah Katz, and Ron Richards contributed to this article.



Several thousand New York City transit workers rallied outside the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's office April 24 to defend their health-care benefits.

Militant/Laura Anderson

Clerical workers, members of Office and Professional Employees International Union Local 153, on picket line April 28 outside Group Health Incorporated in Manhattan, New York. The workers have been on strike since mid-April in response to moves by the company to cut health and pension benefits.

'Militant' launches six-week fund drive

Continued from front page
from Paris, Pyongyang, Auckland, Glasgow, and Sydney, as well as many cities in North America, for example.

In the last year, teams of worker correspondents have traveled to Argentina, Cuba, and Korea to bring firsthand reports of important working-class struggles and big political developments.

The *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* don't receive any funding from capitalist businesses or advertisers, but have relied for 74 years on contributions from workers and farmers who need and rely on the publications.

Supporters responded magnificently to last's year's special appeal for readers to send in the Bush government's tax refund, sending in a total of $25,000 in the second half of last year, providing a real boost to the finances of the papers.

For this new fund, supporters of the paper in cities around the world will be discussing local goals with the aim of raising $50,000 by June 15.

The fund will help to cover the substantial costs of producing and distributing these publications. From printing costs, rent, staff salaries, travel, office expenses, shipping, phone calls, and upkeep of editorial resources, the month-to-month expenses of the two publications run far beyond income received from sales of the *Militant* and *PM*.

The editors of the two publications are encouraging all readers to contribute to the fund and to join the broader effort. "Whether large or small, all pledges and donations will be welcome," said *Militant* editor Greg McCartan. "We can tap into the interest and support from co-workers and those who attend Militant Labor Forums. People who know the two periodicals through literature tables in working-class districts and at plant gates will also want to help, which is a good reason to have a donation box on every table."

Supporters will want to waste no time in organizing special Militant Labor Forums to launch the drive in their area and to gain pledges and contributions. Over the next week partisans of the socialist publications will discuss and adopt goals for the fund in their areas. If you want to help, see page 12 for information on how to contact *Militant* supporters near you. Contributions can be sent to the Militant at 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

Chocolate workers walk out

Continued from front page
behind our decision," Christine Baltimore, a Hershey's worker for 10 years, told the *Patriot News* after seeing the response from passersby to the strike. Baltimore drew cheers when she came to the picket line dressed as an orange M&M, a product of Hershey's competitor M&M Mars Inc.

There is no reason why they should have to bear higher costs for health care, said the strikers, pointing out that the company can afford it despite its argument that health insurance costs are increasing at a fast pace. Hershey's posted $87 million profit in the first quarter, 10 percent more than a year ago. "This company is making money hand over fist and there is no reason it can't be shared," Frankleen Gibson, an air-conditioning laborer, told the *Lebanon Daily News*. "We're ready and we're going to stand tough. We're not going back in a week or two."

Workers at the union hall, located one block from the factory, are organizing members to sign up shifts on the 24-hour picket. The union is also posting pickets at the company's 23 other locations, including the Reese's plant.

The company also appears to be organized for a fight. Analyst George Askew of Legg Mason said the company has $30 million more in inventory than it needs at this time of year and a cash balance of about $220 million. Hershey Foods has also hired an antiunion outfit to position thugs around the struck plants. "They can pay these goons from other states, but they can't pay us our benefits," said union picket Jimmy Kline.

The wage scale at Hershey's starts at around $15 an hour and tops out at close to $20, said a worker at the hall. A short distance down the road, Hershey's pays workers at the Reese's plant 80 cents an hour more for the same labor grades. The company has put guards with video cameras outside the nonunion factory.

Sterling Gernert, 40, who walked the picket line during strikes in 1972 and 1980, told the press that he sees more solidarity this time than in the last two struggles. "The people are more riled up than ever. I'm ready for this strike. We'll stay out as long as it takes."

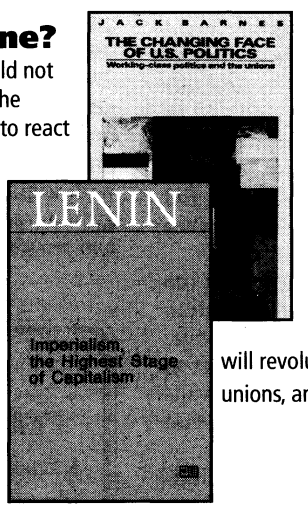
Bob Stanton in Philadelphia contributed to this article.

From Pathfinder

by V.I. Lenin

What Is To Be Done?
"The Social-Democrat's ideal should not be the trade-union secretary, but the tribune of the people, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression..."

Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism
"I trust that this pamphlet will help the reader to understand the fundamental economic question, that of the economic essence of imperialism," Lenin wrote in 1917. "For unless this is studied, it will be impossible to understand and appraise modern war and modern politics.
$3.95



Changing Face of U.S. Politics
Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions
by Jack Barnes
A handbook for workers coming into the factories, mines, and mills, as they react to the uncertain life, turmoil, and brutality of capitalism. It shows how millions of workers, as political resistance grows, will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all of society. **$19.95**

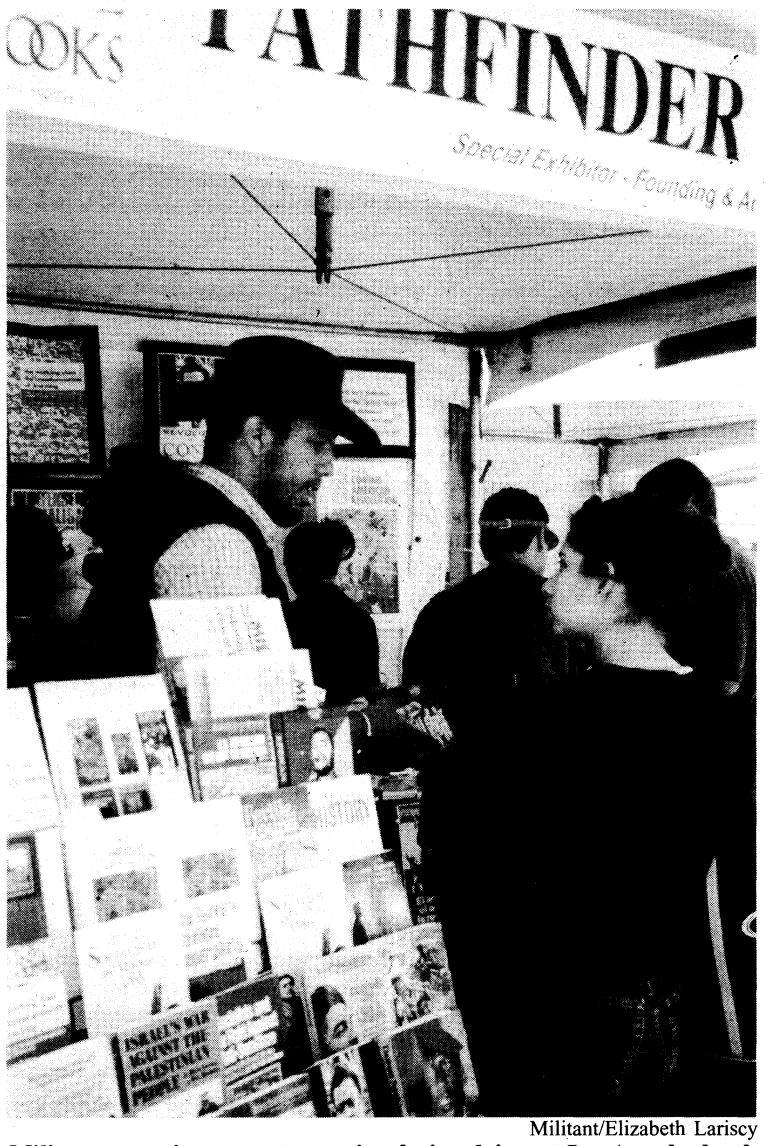
Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

'Militant' supporters gear up for target week

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Impressive results in a number of cities kept the subscription drive for the *Militant* slightly ahead of schedule this week, as supporters of the socialist press gear up for a target week in the campaign. From May 4–12, partisans of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* are planning to organize an intensive 10 days of sales door-to-door, on street corners, on the job, and at protest actions to get ahead of schedule on all aspects of the drive.

Reports from a number of areas show that socialist workers, young socialists, and supporters of the communist movement continue to get enthusiastic responses from workers and youth who are interested in the socialist publications and Pathfinder titles. We're getting more midweek orders for extra papers from supporters who sell out their bundle and urgently need more.



Militant/Elizabeth Lariscy

***Militant* campaigner promotes circulation drive at Los Angeles book fair where participants at event purchased 200 Pathfinder titles.**

The subscription drive was bolstered by hefty sales at the April 27–28 *Los Angeles Times* Book Fair where partisans of the campaign sold 17 *Militant* subscriptions, 4 *PM* subscriptions, and 200 Pathfinder books and pamphlets worth $2,000. "There was a constant flow of visitors to our booth," wrote Elizabeth Lariscy, a garment worker. "The Palestinian struggle was a center of our discussions at the event as we sold 44 titles on the Middle East and the Jewish question. We also sold 50 books and pamphlets on the Cuban Revolution."

Lariscy said the best sellers were 11 copies of *The Communist Manifesto*, 10 of *Israel's War Against the Palestinian People*, 9 of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, 8 of *From the Escambray to the Congo*, 6 of *Fascism: What It Is and How to Fight It*, 6 of *How Can the Jews Survive?* and 5 of *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

The *Militant* sent extra papers to Cleveland and Tampa among other areas. Eva Braiman, a meat packer in Cleveland, wrote, "We are off to a strong start largely due to responding to world politics by reaching out in the working-class district where our bookstore is located. We sold four subscriptions to the *Militant*, a copy of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, and other books at a table in front of a popular Arab market nearby.

"Two workers who live in the area bought *PM* subscriptions from us when we visited their homes. On campus tables at Cleveland State University and Case Western Reserve students engaged us in lively discussions on the Mideast, U.S. imperialism, and the Jewish question that led to five of them buying copies of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*," Braiman added.

Henry Hillenbrand in Tampa said they sold out of papers while participating in a march and rally of 400 people on April 28 in Orlando, Florida, that called for support to the Palestinian people against the Israeli military offensive. They sold 10 *Militant* subscriptions, 12 copies of the paper, 2 copies of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, and other Pathfinder titles at the demonstration.

Sales at plant gates

Organizing regular sales at plant gates is a good way to strengthen the circulation of the paper," said Barbara Bowman from the New York Garment District. "We sold a *PM* subscription to a seamstress from Lima, Peru, who was on her way to work. We've been having a lot of luck selling *PM* to workers at plant gates," she said.

Socialist workers and young socialists organized a sales team in the anthracite coal mining region in eastern Pennsylvania where they sold a *Militant* subscription in Minersville, and four copies of the paper in Girardville. Workers in Minersville talked about the industrial pollution caused by sludge dumping and its effect on the environment, including on crops.

"We also sold eight copies of the *Militant* and a copy of *Palestine and the Arabs' Fight for Liberation* to students at Penn State University in State College, Pennsylvania," wrote a supporter in eastern Pennsylvania.

"Being involved in the political life of the region is helping us to keep on target in Newark, New Jersey," said meat packer Dean Hammond. "A journalism student we met at a teach-in on Palestine at Rutgers University in New Brunswick mailed in her money for a *Militant* subscription after telling us how it was hard to get the Palestinians' side of the conflict by relying on the capitalist media. She said she liked our explanation of the need for a revolutionary struggle for a democratic, secular Palestine as the key to peace in the Middle East."

Hammond said socialist workers in Newark sold two *PM* subscriptions at an event commemorating the life of musician and garment worker Santiago Villanueva, who was assaulted on the job by cops while he was having an epileptic seizure. They also sold a *PM* subscription and a copy of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* to a young person living in a working-class neighborhood who is preparing to attend medical school in Cuba. The student said she thought getting the *PM* and the book would be necessary reading before traveling to the country."

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic the sales campaign is also going strong. At a recent demonstration in Glasgow, Scotland, socialists set up a literature table where they sold eight copies of the *Militant*, two subscriptions, three copies of *Israel's War Against the Palestinian People*, as well as titles by Malcolm X and Cuban revolutionaries Che Guevara and Víctor Dreke.

Participants in the circulation drive are gearing up for the May 4–12 target week by stepping up political discussions and sales to co-workers on the job, and planning more sales activities in working-class neighborhoods. A strong push for *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* is needed since sales of that title are slightly behind schedule. In Birmingham socialists are helping to point the way forward by selling three copies of the book, including one to a young textile worker. "She recently bought a number of Pathfinder books, including *Malcolm X Talks to Young People* and *On the Jewish Question*," said Jeanne FitzMaurice. "The other night she had the Malcolm X book on her machine and remarked, 'If the rest of the books are as good as this one, I'm in for a real good time.'"

Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Subscription Drive
April 13–June 23 (week 2)

	Militant			PM		Book	
Country	**Goal**	**Sold**	**%**	**Goal**	**Sold**	**Goal**	**Sold**
Sweden							
Gothenburg	13	7	54%	2		8	5
Stockholm	10	3	30%	3		5	2
Sweden Total	23	10	43%	5		13	7
New Zealand							
Auckland	10	3	30%	1		5	
Christchurch	8	2	25%	1		3	
N.Z. total	18	5	28%	2		8	
United States							
Brownsville	4	4	100%	3	1		
Los Angeles	35	21	60%	15	5	10	3
Washington	25	12	48%	12	2	15	5
Allentown	18	7	39%	5	2	10	1
NY Garment Dist.	80	31	39%	40	9	50	4
Seattle	30	11	37%	12	2	16	3
Detroit	40	14	35%	13	4	20	4
Miami	30	10	33%	15	1	15	1
Cleveland	25	6	24%	5	1	20	6
Philadelphia	25	6	24%	10	3	15	1
Twin Cities	50	12	24%	25	5	25	
Pittsburgh	45	10	22%	5		20	1
Birmingham	20	4	20%	8	2	10	3
Newark	55	11	20%	25	6	35	7
Brooklyn	45	8	18%	35	7	35	5
Tampa	25	4	16%	6		12	4
Des Moines	40	6	15%	25	9	21	1
Upper Manhattan	75	11	15%	50	8	40	2
Houston	30	4	13%	12	2	20	7
Chicago	35	4	11%	20	3	25	2
Charlotte	18	2	11%	7	1	10	1
Omaha	9	1	11%	15	1	10	1
Western Colorado	18	2	11%	8		12	
San Francisco	30	3	10%	18		15	1
Atlanta	40	3	8%	15	2	30	3
Boston	30	1	3%	15	2	20	
Tucson	5		0%	1			
U.S. total	**882**	**208**	**24%**	**420**	**78**	**511**	**66**
United Kingdom	**35**	**8**	**23%**	**12**	**2**	**20**	**6**
Canada							
Toronto	**25**	**9**	**36%**	**6**		**15**	**1**
Montreal	15	2	13%	5	2	16	6
Vancouver	30	1	3%	6		20	2
Canada total	70	12	17%	17	2	51	9
Australia	20	3	15%	4	2	12	2
Iceland	6		0%	1		4	
Int'l totals	**1054**	**246**	**23%**	**461**	**84**	**619**	**90**
Goal/Should be	**1050**	**210**	**20%**	**460**	**92**	**625**	**125**
	IN THE UNIONS						
	Militant			**PM**		**Book**	
	Goal	**Sold**	**%**	**Goal**	**Sold**	**Goal**	**Sold**
Canada							
UFCW	**5**	**1**	**20%**	**1**		**4**	
UNITE	3		0%	2		3	
Total	8	1	13%	3	0	7	
United States							
UMWA	15	2	13%	2		10	
UNITE	50	2	4%	45	4	50	
UFCW	50		0%	50		50	
Total	115	4	3%	97	4	110	
New Zealand							
NDU	1		0%			1	1
MWU	2		0%				
Total	3		0%			1	1
Australia							
AMIEU	3		0%			3	
MUA	2		0%			3	
Total	5		0%			6	

May Day rally demands amnesty

Continued from front page

being is entitled to have equal rights no matter what country they come here from." Originally from El Salvador, Zuniga joined delegations earlier that day visiting legislators to express opposition to Bush's immigration policy and to present an alternative plan known as the Freedom Act. Most legislators, she explained, were not available to meet with them. Zuniga also noted that the only Latinos she saw during her lobby efforts were those in the cafeteria—in the basement.

Imelda Hernández, 20, came because her dad, originally from Mexico, who harvests mushrooms near Kalamazoo, Michigan, was involved in struggles for better working conditions. "It's good everyone brought their flags," Hernández said, referring to the flags carried by participants reflecting their countries of origin. There were a sea of flags carried by Hondurans, as well as those from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Ecuador, Puerto Rico, Argentina, and more.

The action was also called to respond to the March 27 U.S. Supreme Court decision stating that undocumented workers can be fired with no questions asked, for union activity or any other reason. "This decision is a devastating blow to all undocumented workers' ability to organize for their rights," stated Baldemar Velasquez, president of FLOC.

Brief remarks from the stage were made by numerous speakers representing the various groups sponsoring the rally. In addition to Velasquez, the Latino Workers Center, National Coalition for Dignity and Amnesty for Immigrants, Asociacion Tepeyac of New York, and many others were represented.

Periodic chants interspersed the speakers' remarks. One of the more popular ones was "Bush, escucha, estamos en la lucha" (Bush, listen, we are in the struggle).

More actions were announced, including a march for legalization in Chicago during Cinco de Mayo.

Tom Headley and Darryl Sheppard contributed to this article.

AMIEU–Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union; MUA–Maritime Union of Australia; MWU– Meat Workers Union; NDU–National Distribution Union; UFCW–United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA–United Mine Workers of America; UNITE–Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textiles Employees

Meeting to mark gains in workers' rights fight

BY CHRIS HOEPPNER

MIAMI—Supporters of workers' rights are building a May 11 meeting here to celebrate the accomplishments in the fight by Michael Italie and his supporters, who, since last October, have campaigned across the United States to oppose company and government assaults on working people.

"We have spoken to thousands of people, collected thousands more signatures, and joined with others standing up to political firings and intimidation by the bosses and their government," said Italie in an interview.

Italie was the only candidate for mayor of Miami last fall to oppose U.S. imperialism's war against Afghanistan and accelerated attacks on the rights of working people at home. After a televised candidates debate where he explained his position, as well as defended the Cuban Revolution, he was fired from his job as a sewing machine operator by his employer, Goodwill Industries of South Florida on October 22.

Goodwill bosses told Italie, who was on the ballot as the Socialist Workers Party candidate, that "because of your views of the U.S. government, which are contrary to those of this agency, you cannot work here any more." Goodwill is a major contractor of uniforms and flags to the U.S. military and a notorious antilabor outfit that pays many of its employees below the minimum wage.

Supporter of Italie's campaign passes out flyers to his co-workers at Goodwill garment plant in Miami where he worked.

In the wake of September 11, the U.S. Justice Department stepped up its arrests and victimization of hundreds of working people, police conducted widespread roadblocks and intrusive checks, Congress passed legislation giving the cops greater powers to spy on and detain individuals, and employers tested how far they could go in firing workers whose views or union activity they did not like. Italie and his supporters launched what was the first nationwide fight in to oppose this accelerated assault on workers' rights.

A number of workers, union officials, and others who did not agree with Italie's opposition to Washington's war on Afghanistan signed up to support the fight and sent messages condemning the firing. The case became one way class-conscious workers were not only able to explain to co-workers and fellow unionists how the U.S. rulers use their wars to get workers to put off strike action, ease up their resistance to the increased pace of work and declining safety on the job, or racist attacks and murders by cops of working people. It also set an example of standing up to these imperialist war pressures and refusing to allow hard-won gains to be taken away by the U.S. rulers without a fight.

After he was fired Italie went right back to the plant gate at Goodwill during the shift change to let his co-workers know about the firing. He and his supporters held a press conference that received widespread coverage in the Miami press. And he pledged to expand the fight to demand reinstatement to his job in order to make Goodwill think twice before firing someone else. In an interview here Michael Italie reviewed the accomplishments of his six-month long free speech fight, which centered on an 18-stop tour, traveling to more than 40 cities across the U.S. and Canada. "I have joined with meat packers fighting for a union in Nebraska and coal miners from Colorado," said Italie, "Palestinians whose jobs are threatened because they speak out against the Israeli occupation of their land, and high school and college students angry about police brutality and U.S. imperialism's war in Afghanistan."

Italie said the campaign has "scored important victories," such as "exposing Goodwill's treatment of myself and other workers in the plant, shining a light on this 'nonprofit' company's miserable working conditions and undemocratic actions. Thousands have learned how capitalist class justice is organized against working people. Unless we mobilize our collective strength workers have no freedom of speech or other rights under capitalism."

More than 2,000 workers, youth, and others who learned about Italie's fight signed petitions and sent letters to protest the firing, as well as contributing financially to the campaign. A former Goodwill worker from Connecticut sent a letter of support explaining that companies like Goodwill "want to turn the workplace into a 'no-speech' zone."

"Many workers and farmers linked my fight to their own," said Italie. Eight meat packers involved in a union organizing drive in Omaha invited Italie to a house meeting to share experiences about their common struggles, as did others in Minneapolis and Detroit.

"I explained that these firings and company efforts to break the unions are not isolated incidents," added Italie. "The capitalist class as a whole, and its government in Washington, D.C., is driven to speed up production, cut wages, and intensify racist and sexist attacks on workers and farmers around the world."

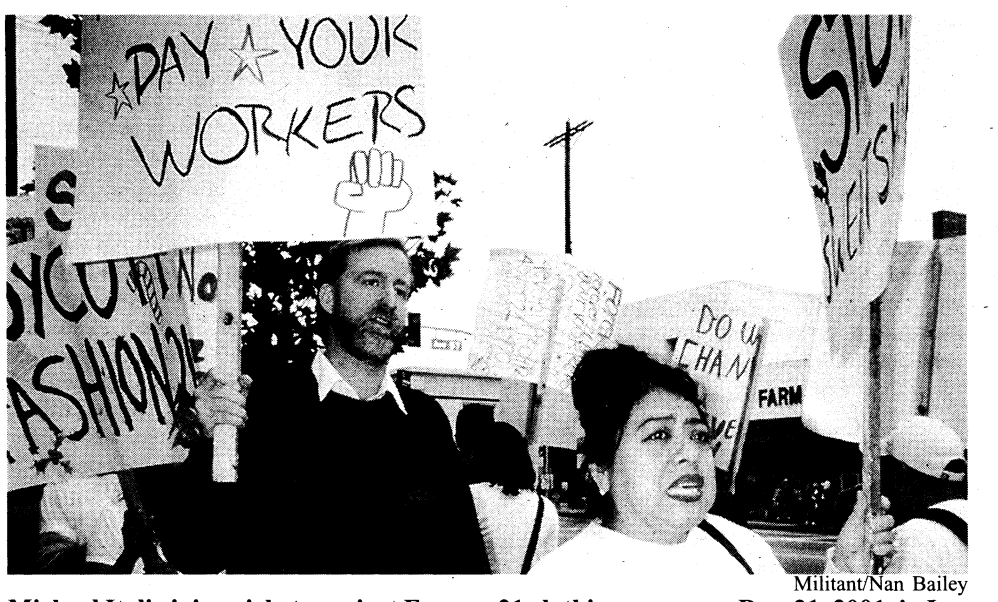
Italie was also able to use the platform gained in his fight to explain the stakes for working people in opposing Washington's brutal treatment of 300 men captured in Afghanistan and elsewhere who are being held in cages on its illegally held naval base in Guantánamo, Cuba.

Italie shared platforms with and spoke to other fighters and working people who faced firings or jail since U.S. president George Bush launched his "war on terrorism" after September 11. These included Ahmad Daniels, forced out of his job as Minority Affairs Director in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, for a letter to the editor on the U.S. war against Afghanistan; and a number of Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims, such as Alia Atawneh in San Francisco. Atawneh was fired by Macy's because she stood up to anti-Arab abuse from customers. Italie met with Sami Al-Arian, a Palestinian professor at the University of South Florida whose job is being threatened because he is an outspoken supporter of Palestinian rights.

"At every meeting I was able to explain Washington's frame-up of the five Cuban revolutionaries who were in this country to help learn about attacks against Cuba by counterrevolutionary organizations based in the United States. They were railroaded to jail on charges of conspiracy 'to act as an unregistered agent of a foreign power,' 'to commit espionage,' and 'to commit murder.' The capitalist class is working overtime to split us off from fellow fighters," said Italie, "and to break our will to resist. It has been the aim of my fight to tell the truth about the Cuban Revolution and the international struggle against imperialist domination.

"I count it as a big success," the socialist worker said, "when a meat packer in Omaha told me that while he at first supported the U.S. government's 'war on terrorism,' that he now opposes Washington's war moves after having read Pathfinder literature and discussing it through with socialist workers on the job."

"It was the support I have won which forced the company to retreat from its efforts to deny me my unemployment benefits," explained Italie. In mid-March the Goodwill bosses filed appeal of Italie's eligibility for benefits, demanding that the sewing machine operator be cut off from his $177 weekly unemployment benefits and be forced to repay the value of the benefits he had received over the previous four months. But just days before the hearing to decide on its appeal, Goodwill withdrew its challenge.



Militant/Nan Bailey

Michael Italie joins pickets against Forever 21 clothing company Dec. 21, 2001, in Los Angeles in support of their fight for back wages.

Italie concluded that "the company made a political decision. They knew that every action they took against me would be met with a fight. They surrendered in this battle because they did not want to face a new round of press conferences in front of the factory, and more petitions and letters from across the United States."

Young people joined fight

Young people have played an important role in this fight for workers rights and were central to arranging speaking events at three high schools and eight college campuses.

"Youth I talked to were outraged by my firing," said Italie. "Twenty-year-old Heather Paige in Miami took the lead in the days after I was fired by going right up to the company gate to hand out flyers to workers leaving the plant in support of my fight. A new Young Socialists member almost single-handedly organized a program attended by 30 people in Brownsville, Texas. Young fighters at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, organized a program that attracted 35 students and resulted in interviews with both the campus TV station and newspaper. There are similar examples from New York to Ohio, where I will be speaking this week."

Youth leaders from 15 organizations around the world endorsed the campaign against the political firing of Michael Italie. Many endorsed when learning about the fight from representatives of the Young Socialists at a December 2001 meeting of the World Federation of Democratic Youth in Athens, Greece. These included leaders of the Vietnam Youth Federation, the Union of Young Communists in Cuba, the Western Sahara liberation youth organization, the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students, and others.

In addition, leaders of the fight to shut down the U.S. naval base in Vieques, Puerto Rico, joined in the effort. Carlos Zenón, president of the Vieques Fishermen's Association, and Ismael Guadalupe, a spokesperson for the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, both endorsed Italie's fight.

In the course of his tour Italie had over a dozen media interviews, including one in December from New York with Amy Goodman on her nationally syndicated radio program "Democracy Now."

Throughout his tour Italie explained that the courts and laws under capitalism are stacked against workers. "The courts, all the way up to the Supreme Court," Italie noted, "have ruled consistently against workers fired for their political views. It is in this context that no attorney has stepped forward to take on this fight on the legal front. What is most important, however, are the political gains that have been won in the course of this free speech fight."

"My firing occurred at the height of the imperialists' prowar, patriotic hysteria," Italie stated, "But a key lesson I have learned in my fight is that workers and farmers continue to use the political space we have won over generations to advance our struggles. While we are bringing the fight against my firing to a close, the struggle continues for workers' rights wherever working people refuse to give in to the bosses' attacks on our rights and living conditions. Another lesson of this fight is that only by relying on our own power, independently of the Democrats and Republicans, can working people organize to rid the world of capitalism and its war, racism, injustice, and economic oppression."

The Committee to Defend Freedom of Speech and the Bill of Rights will be the sponsor of the victory celebration May 11 in Miami. The meeting will be an opportunity to discuss this fight in the light of the evolution of U.S. and world politics since this campaign was launched six months ago. "I look forward to starting a job soon," Italie said, "and bringing the lessons, experience, and strengths of this fight along with me as part of building the communist movement.

"In the wake of September 11 the U.S. rulers tried to make working people at home and abroad believe they should be given free reign to send their military on brutal missions, to militarize U.S. society, and erode the rights of workers and farmers," Italie said. "In face of their show of power they hoped we would end our resistance to their assaults. But Washington's post-September 11 momentum is spent. From the struggle of the Palestinian people, to mobilizations by workers and peasants in Latin America, to strikes and protests here in the United States, our class is showing its determination to fight for a world free from exploitation, oppression, war, and racism," Italie said. "That is what our campaign was about from the very start. Everyone who joined in this effort will be able to build on the fight we waged together in these continuing struggles."

Defend Workers' Rights!
Celebrate the Michael Italie Free Speech Fight

Speakers: Michael Italie, garment worker who was the socialist candidate for mayor of Miami when he was fired by Goodwill Industries; Ray Taseff, civil rights attorney.

Saturday, May 11, 7:30 p.m.
8325 NE 2nd Ave., Miami

For more information: (305) 724-5965

From Pathfinder

Washington's 50-year Domestic Contra Operation
by Larry Seigle
in New International No. 6
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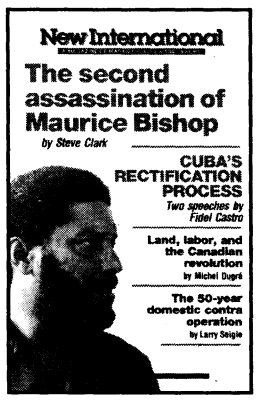

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Cuban youth leader speaks to unionists, students in Australia

BY RON POULSEN AND ALASDAIR MACDONALD

SYDNEY, Australia—"Cuba is going through a great 'Battle of Ideas'" leading to a "transformation among the Cuban people," Otto Rivero, the revolutionary government's minister of youth and the first secretary of the Union of Communist Youth [UJC], told a packed audience of more than 120 people at Trades Hall, Sydney on April 18.

The meeting was organized by the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society, and sponsored by a number of unions and political organizations. In his four-day visit, Rivero also spoke at a New South Wales (NSW) parliamentary reception, at the University of NSW, and at similar events in Melbourne.

The Battle of Ideas is a wide-ranging political and educational effort, he explained, through which the leadership in Cuba aims to advance the proletarian course of the revolution. This is a political battle to win new generations of youth to help lead the struggle to deepen the revolution and to confront the imperialist ideological drive that promotes capitalism and its individualist, "dog-eat-dog" values.

The Battle of Ideas, he said, aims to make education and culture more widely accessible to all generations in Cuba. Rivero explained that it grew out of large mobilizations in 1999 and 2000 protesting the refusal of the U.S. government to return Elián González to Cuba.

This effort is based on the "indispensable condition of the first literacy campaign that enabled all Cubans to read and write," said Rivero. At the time of the revolution's triumph in 1959, one in four adults was illiterate. In 1961, more than 200,000 mainly high school students were mobilized into even the remotest parts of the country, despite murderous counterrevolutionary attacks, to teach a million people to read and write, while participating in the labor of farm and home.

These and ongoing advances in education were part of a "mobilization of human resources" by the country's revolutionary government, said Rivero. The Cuban government is presently working toward a goal of one teacher for instruction in all courses up to grade nine, and no more than 20 students per teacher.

Revolutionary social workers

Rivero cited the results of a recent UNESCO study of Latin American education standards which placed Cuba, with more than 90 points out of 100, well ahead of second-placed Argentina, which scored just over 70 points.

At the time of the revolution, said the youth leader, "there were three universities; now there are 72." Today 1 million students are placed in 9,000 primary schools, half a million are studying in some 1,000 lower secondary schools, and 405,000 are enrolled at around 1,000 upper secondary schools. By September, the government will have opened 82 new primary schools and all schools will have a video player, a television set, and a computer for each class, he said.

"A developing force of young people" who are revolutionary social workers are carrying out projects on a community level, collaborating with families to solve a range of social problems, Rivero said. These and other youth organized by the UJC recently arranged a series of house visits across the country to discuss and evaluate questions such as housing, the quality of services, and what television programs are useful.

Over the past several months the youth have been able to visit all households that include children of up to 15 years of age, of whom there are some 2.5 million. In the same period, 20,000 university students visited all dwellings in the capital of Havana, a city of more than 2 million people. Two weeks ago, in just five days, 545,000 retired people across the country who have monthly incomes of less than 100 pesos were visited in their homes.

Some 120,000 people between the ages of 17 and 29 years are neither working nor studying, Rivero said. Many of these are being asked to study in computer science and English while being paid a salary. "So long as Cuba doesn't have work for them, their job is to study," he explained. The goal of the revolution is to have "no young person in Cuba who is neither working nor studying."

'Internationalist spirit'

At the University of NSW lunchtime meeting, in response to a question about Ernesto Che Guevara, the outstanding Argentine-born leader of the Cuban revolution, Rivero emphasized the "universal importance of the internationalist spirit inherited from Che." This is expressed in the Cuban missions to aid liberation struggles in Africa, he said. It is still reflected today, as more than 2,000 Cuban doctors are serving "in some of the most inaccessible regions of the world."

In answer to questions about solidarity with Cuba and defense of the five Cubans imprisoned in U.S. jails, Rivero responded that the "communist youth of Cuba" are helping to lead the international movement to free the five. These revolutionaries have been framed up on conspiracy charges. They were in the United States working to alert Havana of attacks being organized by rightist counterrevolutionary outfits. "The best gesture of solidarity is to participate in this battle," he said.

Over the last decade the U.S. government had tried to exacerbate the economic hardships in Cuba resulting from the collapse of trade and aid with the Soviet Union and countries in Eastern Europe by passing "laws to tighten the blockade and impose it on third countries," said Rivero. He was responding to a question about U.S.-Cuba relations. The economic embargo has been imposed on the Cuban people by U.S. imperialism for more than four decades with the goal of strangling the revolution.

At a time when the U.S. rulers are striving to "become the lords of the world," Rivero said, revolutionary Cuba is "ready to continue on the same road to defend our conquests and our independence, and ready to defy this great enemy."

Ron Poulsen is a member of the Maritime Union of Australia. Alasdair MacDonald is a member of the Young Socialists.

Militant

Revolutionary social workers from province of Holguin. This developing force of young people are visiting homes across Cuba to discuss with families how to solve social problems, health threats such as dengue fever, and how to advance education.

Cuban tours New Zealand to build support for five revolutionaries held in U.S. prisons

BY JANET ROTH

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—The four-city tour of New Zealand by Fernando Duque, an official of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), was an opportunity for many working people and youth to learn about the five Cuban patriots framed up and jailed in the United States and to learn about the Cuban Revolution.

In a one-week visit in April, Duque spoke at public meetings in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Hamilton; at university meetings in Auckland and Wellington; and at a community education class in Christchurch. He also had a number of media interviews. Some 260 people took the opportunity to hear him speak.

Duque pointed to the long history of aggressive acts by successive governments in the United States against Cuba, leading to thousands of Cubans being killed, injured, and disabled. "In 1961 there was an invasion which we defeated in just 72 hours," he said. The U.S. government and counterrevolutionary groups based on U.S. soil have "organized terrorist acts like bombing embassies, destroying crops, introducing biological pests, and so on. The first plane ever hijacked was a Cuban plane," he said, a hijacking "invented by the CIA and the terrorist organizations it backs."

To help learn about and defend Cuba from such actions carried out by counterrevolutionary groups based in the United States, "we had to infiltrate these terrorist organizations," Duque explained. "We had the right to do so because we reported their activities to U.S. authorities and they did nothing." For this information-gathering, five Cuban revolutionaries have now been jailed in the United States for between 15 years and life, framed up on a range of "conspiracy" charges. "This was a frame-up," Duque stressed. "It was established they did nothing against the United States."

Duque mentioned the mass rallies and televised political discussions held in Cuba to campaign for the release of the five prisoners. He urged his audiences to join in campaigning for their release and to write to them and their relatives.

A common question asked of Duque at his meetings was the Cuban government's stance toward the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo in Cuba and about the prisoners from the Afghan war that Washington is holding in brutal conditions at the base.

Duque said the U.S. government illegally occupies the base against the wishes of the Cuban people under a lease signed in 1903, which was "an imposed agreement." Since the triumph of the socialist revolution in 1959 the Cuban government has repeatedly requested Washington vacate the facility, "but they won't accept that. It would be stupid of us to take military action against them, because they are looking for an excuse to violently react. We can not give them that excuse, so we just watch over the border."

He said his personal opinion was that Washington's transfer of the prisoners from Afghanistan to Cuba was a "provocation" and was done without warning the Cuban government.

Audiences also asked a range of questions about Cuba's social policies and trade relations, and about the attempted military coup in Venezuela, which was unfolding as the tour began.

At the Auckland University meeting, a student said he'd heard that some Latin American governments accused Cuba of exporting revolution. "You can't export revolution," the Cuban representative said, "put it in a jar and sell it. But ideas go around. If you're in a country and poor, and you see the government is not working for you but for big business, you look at what you can do to overthrow the government.

"You might get to meet a Cuban doctor in your country, who will tell you honestly about all the shortages and problems in Cuba but also about its accomplishments. And that is what these Latin American governments get upset about. Cuba has never sent troops to impose itself on other countries."

Rebecca Broad, a member of the Young Socialists in Christchurch, contributed to this article. Janet Roth is a meat worker and member of the National Distribution Union.

Write to the five Cuban revolutionaries

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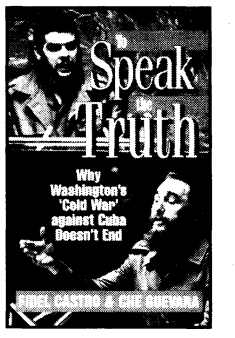

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Vote deepens crisis of bourgeois parties

Continued from front page

lowest tally of a front-runner since the foundation of the Fifth Republic in 1958.

Since the results were announced, virtually all trade unions and organizations associated with the Plural Left, the outgoing government coalition of the Socialist and Communist parties with two openly pro-capitalist parties, the Greens and the Left Radicals, have concentrated on mobilizing for a vote for Chirac in the second round. This, they claim, will "build a dam against fascism," as they portray the vote for Le Pen in terms of a resurgent fascist threat. Socialist Party Finance Minister Laurent Fabius has called this an "anti-Le Pen referendum."

Addressing the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, party leader Robert Hue said, "there is only one thing in France that matters: the mobilization of every militant, and I mean every single militant, to get out the vote for Jacques Chirac." Parts of his speech were broadcast on national radio.

Nearly 2 million working people, youth, and others took part in May Day actions across the country that were held in the framework of opposing Le Pen and his National Front party and supporting a vote for Chirac. The mobilizations succeeded in taking the focus off fighting the employers and their parties who are responsible for anti-immigrant legislation and assaults, attacks on the unions, and attempts to impose austerity measures.

The week before, demonstrations involving hundreds of thousands of people were capped by an action April 27 "for equal rights, against racism and to defeat Le Pen," called by trade unions, left political parties, and other organizations.

Among workers in factories across the country who are discussing whether or not to vote for Chirac, a minority remains strongly opposed because of the policies his government has pursued. Television news programs show daily debates between Socialist and Communist party activists, distributing leaflets in marketplaces calling for a vote for Chirac, and some workers who, in spite of immense pressure, still refuse to accept that a vote for the right-wing Gaullist candidate can aid working people.

One of the many rallies in France after first round of presidential voting. These actions focused on getting out the vote for capitalist candidate and current president Chirac. Many working people abstained from the vote, disgusted with both major parties.

Bankruptcy of two parties

As the capitalist economic crisis has gripped Europe, the Gaullist and Socialist parties have shared responsibility for organizing successive rounds of assaults on workers and farmers. A wave of public workers' strikes and mass demonstrations against the attacks on social benefits by Juppé in November and December of 1995 marked a noticeable upturn in working-class struggles in France.

The upturn came after a successful campaign led by youth against a sub-minimum wage in 1994, and was itself followed by battles of undocumented immigrants for legal status. In 1996 and 1997, French truckers struck and blocked roads for better working conditions, a shorter workweek, and an increase in wages. Undocumented immigrant workers formed the Sans Papiers (Without Papers) coalition to fight the government's reactionary anti-immigrant policies and for the right to work and stay with their families in France.

Campaigns among France's 3 million unemployed broke out in 1998, with workers sitting in government offices to demand jobs, decent levels of unemployment benefits, and benefits for youth under 25. Later that year hundreds of thousands of students took to the streets to call for more teachers, fewer students per class, and better study conditions.

In 2000, working farmers, 66,000 of whom were driven off the land between 1993 and 1996, organized blockades against skyrocketing fuel prices and devastating conditions in the countryside. And last year 300,000 workers took to the streets in defense of their right to retire at 60, while 120,000 mobilized to demand a wage increase from the Jospin government.

The euro austerity drive

Both the Socialist and conservative parties have campaigned for France to adopt the euro, the common currency of the European Union. The French ruling class hid behind the criteria for the European Monetary Union (EMU) as a cover to press for further austerity measures. According to the Maastricht treaty, governments entering the EMU must have budget deficits of no more than 3 percent, prompting moves to slash social spending. Subsidies to farmers were also cut.

Given this course by the bourgeois parties, the voting results should have been expected, as they continued a trend of the past several years.

In the 1998 elections for regional councils and council presidents, a record 42 percent of voters stayed away from the polls, up from 31 percent in 1992. In five regions, Chirac's Rally for the Republic (RPR) and the Union for French Democracy (UDF) made last-minute alliances with Le Pen's National Front to win seats. The national leaderships of the RPR and UDF officially opposed the deal. The National Front increased its vote in several regions hard-hit by unemployment and industrial layoffs.

Last year large numbers of workers again either abstained from voting or cast their ballots for small centrist groups that have the image of being more combative than the governing Plural Left coalition. In the municipal elections the vote for the French CP plummeted as workers became increasingly dissatisfied with the policies of the government.

Fascist demagogy

Le Pen has capitalized on the fact that both the Socialist and Gaullist parties have carried through an assault on working people at a time when unemployment remains persistently high. He has also taken advantage of opposition to austerity measures and attacks carried out under the banner of France's participation in the euro zone.

Le Pen says that if elected his government would quit the European Union and abandon the euro as its first act, restoring the franc as the French national currency and reestablishing protectionist customs barriers. He would amend the constitution to adopt a policy of "national preference"—that is, preference for French citizens in allocating jobs, housing, and social benefits—combined with stepping up legalized discrimination against immigrants.

The fascist has taken advantage of moves by the major capitalist parties to severely limit legal immigration, and Chirac's "law and order" campaign, to bolster his own scapegoating of immigrants for the social and economic problems faced by working people under capitalism. He advocates limiting the right of immigrants to become French citizens, along with an even sharper curtailment of legal immigration through steps such as putting an end to family regroupment.

Geographic spread of vote

Le Pen's National Front and an associated split off received 5.5 million votes, almost 1 million more than in the last presidential election seven years ago. The vote registered the fact that the parties are no longer a regional movement centered in the Marseille area but have spread to the industrial north, the working-class suburbs around Paris, and the Alsace region in the east.

One new characteristic shown in the recent elections was the emergence of a base of support for the National Front in the countryside, where Le Pen received around 18 percent of the working farmers' vote. Some 31 percent of working farmers abstained. Traditionally, the majority of farmers have supported the Gaullist party, but this year Chirac received only 33 percent of the farmer vote.

The Green party, part of the governing coalition, has been the most openly anti-farmer party seen in many years. Their reactionary attacks include blaming working farmers for bad food quality, environmental pollution, and "mad cow disease." In accusing working farmers of "productivism"—concentrating on production rather than quality—they shift the blame off the normal workings of the capitalist market and the rents and mortgages system dominated by the banks and agribusiness. At the demand of the Greens the Jospin government adopted a special tax

Continued on Page 14

Chronology of crisis of bourgeois parties in France

Below is a chronology, based on reports in the *Militant*, of some major events in France over the last seven years.

1995

•A plan announced by the RPR Prime Minister Alain Juppé to gut social security, known as the "Juppé Plan," along with other attacks on education and health services and workers' rights, sparks an explosion of labor actions, centered among public workers, and student protests, starting in October.

Demonstrations reach 700,000 people in November and 1 million in December. Twenty-four days of nationwide strikes are spearheaded by rail workers. Forced to abandon the Juppé Plan, the government continues its austerity course.

1996

•Unions call a national day of action May 23 for a shorter workweek. Telecommunications and rail workers, teachers, and other public employees organize strikes and marches against threatened cutbacks and layoffs.

•In October, nearly 2 million public workers join a one-day strike, and hundreds of thousands march against Juppé's plans to freeze state workers' pay and cut jobs as preparation for entering European Monetary Union (EMU). Unemployment stands officially at 12.6 percent; in reality, say union officials, the figure is more like 20 percent. The agriculture ministry announces that 66,000 family farmers have lost their farms since 1993.

Truck drivers barricade roads for 12 days, demanding and winning a retirement age of 55.

•In December, President Jacques Chirac hails a European Union summit, which papers over French-German and other conflicts, as progress toward a single European currency. Also backing the EMU, SP leader Jospin calls for shorter workweek to generate 700,000 new jobs for youth.

•Throughout the year, immigrants stage protests opposing restrictions and deportations, and demand full legal status.

1997

•Transit workers in 60 cities strike for a 35-hour workweek with no loss in pay. Unions call national days of action in January and February.

•In the June parliamentary elections the SP trounces the conservative RPR, winning 25 percent of the vote in the first round and 241 of the 577 parliamentary seats in the final voting. The CP vote also increases. The National Front's Jean-Marie Le Pen takes 15 percent in the first round.

•In November, truck drivers strike for five days to demand wage increases.

1998

•December 1997-January, 1998: Jobless workers occupy dozens of offices across France. Jospin announces $165 million in emergency funds. January 17, 50,000 participate in "day of action" calling for increasing minimum unemployment benefits and the minimum wage.

•In March, 30,000 demonstrate against National Front.

•500,000 high school students, out of a total of 2.3 million, demonstrate in 350 cities October 15 demanding more teachers, fewer students per class, and better study conditions. Teachers unions back the rallies.

•In November, demonstrations across France demand that 60,000 undocumented workers slated for deportation be given papers. Rail workers stage simultaneous actions across Europe protesting European Union plan to sell off state-owned railroads. 11,000 rail workers strike demanding state-run railway hire 6,000 more workers. Thousands demonstrate against plant closures.

•Temporary jobs leap by 51 percent within two years. Nearly one worker in 10 is on temporary contract.

1999

•September-October, 25,000 employers and their supporters rally against a proposed law that would nominally cut the workweek to 35 hours, with the stated intent of creating jobs. Tens of thousands of working people hold protests against layoffs and demanding jobs.

•Thousands of farmers hold series of actions protesting declining farm income following a steep drop in prices of agricultural products.

2000

•August-September, Fishermen, truckers, and farmers block every French port and blockade 100 oil refineries protesting rising gas prices. Protests denounced by main trade union federations and main parties in the workers movement, but the actions maintain widespread support among working people. Government agrees to reduce fuel taxes by 15 percent.

2001

•In January, 300,000 workers hit the streets of Paris, Marseilles, Toulouse and some 75 other cities opposing the employers' confederation's decision to stop payments into a retirement fund. The boss confederation demands the unions agree to raise the number of years necessary for private sector workers to retire from 40 to 45 years. Five days later, 120,000 public workers demonstrate for a wage increase that keeps pace with inflation.

Seized U.S. spy ship is emblem to Korean national sovereignty

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

PYONGYANG, north Korea—The *USS Pueblo* spy ship, seized in north Korean waters by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on Jan. 23, 1968, is now docked here as a museum and a monument to the resolve of the people of this country in face of Washington's imperial arrogance.

The Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists leadership delegation of Steve Clark, Jack Willey, and Olympia Newton, who visited north Korea for two weeks in April, toured the ship while here. The delegation was in north Korea to stand in solidarity with the Korean people in the context of the U.S. government's continuing threats, including president George W. Bush's slander of north Korea earlier this year as part of an international "axis of evil," and the Pentagon's "leak" of the Nuclear Posture Review, which includes the DPRK as one of seven potential targets of Washington's massive nuclear arsenal. The SWP and YS leaders took part in activities surrounding two national celebrations while in north Korea.

The guided tour of the *Pueblo* tells much of the history of U.S. imperialism's provocations and the DPRK's subsequent capture of the ship, events which took place at the same time that Washington was carrying out a brutal war against the people of Vietnam.

After Washington ignored repeated warnings from the DPRK to stop incursions by the spy ship into its waters, north Korean naval forces captured the ship near Wonsan, a city in the southeast of this country on the coast of the Sea of Japan. The ship had violated north Korean sovereign territory some 17 times before it was seized.

Eighty-two crew members, including six officers, were captured in the seizure. One U.S. crew member was killed and four were injured. The captured sailors were held in north Korea for 11 months.

Disguised as marine research ship

When confronted by north Korean forces, the *Pueblo*'s commanding officer, Lloyd Bucher, initially avoided pursuit. The Koreans then fired on the ship; bullet holes are still visible on the ship's exterior.

According to the tour guide, the ship was flying no U.S. flag, in line with its thin disguise as a civilian marine research ship. In face of the Korean gunfire, the guide explained, an officer of the *Pueblo* raised the flag and asked that as a civilian vessel it be allowed to return to port.

The Korean soldiers refused, boarding the ship, lowering the U.S. flag, and raising the flag of the DPRK. When the Koreans captured the vessel, they found crew members burning papers.

U.S. president Lyndon Johnson expressed public outrage at the capture of the ship and its crew, claiming the *Pueblo* was a research vessel on the open seas. But the ship was equipped with two .50-caliber machine guns in the front and back, seven antennas, and a room full of cryptographic equipment used to send messages directly to U.S. bases in the area.

Handheld weapons were also captured when the ship was seized. Along with the spying equipment, they are on display in the *Pueblo* itself as well as in the Museum of the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War in Pyongyang.

U.S. threatens retaliation and war

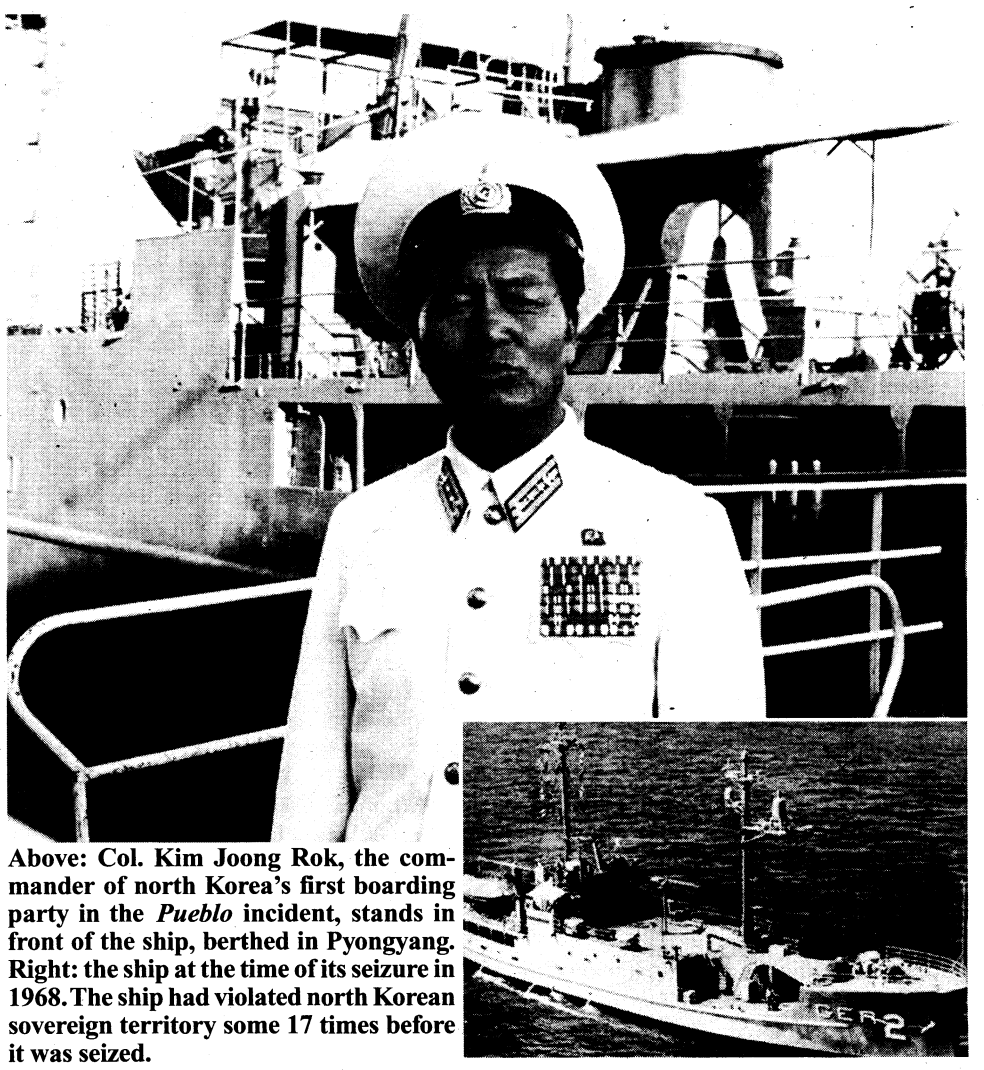
The U.S. government demanded an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council to condemn the attack on this "civilian" vessel. The Johnson administration threatened retaliation, including war if necessary, to gain the return of the *Pueblo* and its crew.

Washington immediately deployed the nuclear aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise* to waters off Korea. On January 25, Johnson called up almost 15,000 members of Air National Guard, Air Force reserve, and Navy reserve units. In the weeks to come the White House put together a task force from the U.S. Navy's Seventh (Pacific) Fleet that included several other aircraft carriers, three cruisers, 18 destroyers, a nuclear-powered submarine, and several supply ships. Washington also beefed up U.S. Air Force task forces in Osan, Kusan, and other areas of south Korea.

Today nobody, including the U.S. government, gives credence to Washington's lie that the *Pueblo* was a marine research ship. The U.S. Navy web site explains that in November 1967 the ship had "departed to the Far East to undertake electronic intelligence collection and other duties." It had spied on north Korean naval vessels as well as key radio and radar stations.

The north Korean people and government refused to be intimidated by Washington's threats. The Korean People's Army and civilian defense guards prepared for wartime mobilizations. On February 8 DPRK president Kim Il Sung responded to the Johnson administration's threats, saying the Korean government was prepared to "answer any 'retaliation' with retaliation" and to "meet all-out war with all-out war."

The DPRK demanded the U.S. government acknowledge the violation of north Korean territorial waters by the spy ship, apologize for the incursion, and issue assurances that no further such provocations would occur. If those conditions were met, the north Korean government said, then it would consider expelling the 82 captured crew members. Otherwise, it would put them on trial for crimes with sentences of up to life imprisonment or execution.



Above: Col. Kim Joong Rok, the commander of north Korea's first boarding party in the *Pueblo* incident, stands in front of the ship, berthed in Pyongyang. Right: the ship at the time of its seizure in 1968. The ship had violated north Korean sovereign territory some 17 times before it was seized.

The resolve and preparedness of the Korean people stayed Washington's hand. After refusing for months to agree to a document submitted by the DPRK placing responsibility for the incursion squarely on Washington and apologizing on behalf of the U.S. government, Maj. Gen. Gilbert Woodward signed the statement on Dec. 23, 1968, and the crew members were released and expelled from north Korea.

U.S. spy plane shot down

Just four months after the release of the *Pueblo* crew, on April 15 1969, the manned U.S. spy plane *EC-121* violated north Korea's air space. The government of the DPRK responded by firing a guided missile at the plane, shooting it into the sea and killing the crew.

U.S. president Richard Nixon dispatched an aircraft carrier task force to north Korean waters, including the USS *Enterprise*, the aircraft carriers *Ticonderoga, Ranger*, and *Hornet*, and the battleship *New Jersey*. Several hundred bombers were flown into south Korea and placed on alert.

The U.S. government once again backed down, however. It ended its most provocative aerial spying probes not only against the DPRK but for several decades against the People's Republic of China as well.

Floating monument

The DPRK refused to return the *Pueblo* itself in 1968, keeping it as a floating museum documenting the Korean people's firm stance. In the late 1990s, the ship was moved from north Korea's eastern coast to its current location in the country's capital city. It is now docked near the spot on the Tae Dong River where another U.S. warship, the *General Sherman*, went down in flames at the hands of Korean patriots in September 1866.

Since the *Pueblo* and *EC-121* events more than three decades ago, the U.S. government has largely stayed out of north Korean waters and ceased overflying its air space. As such, the *Pueblo* stands as a monument to the fact that the only way for peoples anywhere in the world to hold off U.S. imperialism's war moves and assaults on national sovereignty is to stand their ground in face of Washington's threats, as the Korean people and government did in 1968–69 and continue to do today.

Strikers in Wales press fight against concessions

BY PAUL DAVIES

CAERNARFON, North Wales—"We're building support around the country for our first anniversary rally" on June 8, said Gerald Parry, one of the locked-out workers on the picket line at Friction Dynamics, a manufacturer of car parts. Parry, along with other workers who are fighting to win back their jobs, had just returned from meetings at the Scottish Trade Union Congress to win support for their struggle. Continual hooting of horns as motorists pass the picket line reflects the high level of local support for the union members.

The workers are members of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU). They were locked out last April when they fought the drive by the bosses to cut wages, hire contract workers, undermine union representation, and extend working hours. The fight has importance for workers across the region where unemployment remains high. "Where else will we work?" asked David Jones, one of the pickets. "At a nearby meatpacking plant which has a constant turn over of workers, where the hours suit the bosses not yourself?"

Friction Dynamics boss Craig Smith was able to lock the union members out after putting them on an enforced holiday for eight weeks. The antilabor move came after the government had changed laws to supposedly make it harder for bosses to do exactly what Smith did. "This dispute is an embarrassment for the Labour government and its laws," said Jones, "they want us to go away, but that is not going to happen. We have to win this fight."

On April 22 workers from the picket line attended a magistrate's court to hear a case brought by the government's Health and Safety Executive against Friction Dynamics bosses, after one of the scab workers lost several fingers in an unguarded machine. The magistrates court decided to refer the case to a higher court where it is possible to award larger compensation payments to the injured worker.

"Safety in the plant has gone right down since the dispute started," said Jones. "Recently we've heard about some of the scabs breaking their bones in accidents. They have also run out of scab labor from Caernarfon and are having to recruit from further afield." The replacement workers are hired on 10-week contracts. According to the pickets, many do not return after their first contract is up.

Another sign of the company's weakness is phone calls 12 of the locked-out workers received from Smith, who asked them to come back to work. Gerald Parry related how Smith was "flattering us about our work and pleading with us to come back. He also badmouthed the union. No one has responded to his pleas. He thinks he can deal with each of us alone, but he is dealing with the union," he explained.

For further details of the June 8 rally, contact Tom Jones at the TGWU office, 17 Segontium Terrace, Caernarfon, North Wales. Or call: 01286 672102.

Paul Davies is a meat packer in London.

From Pathfinder

Capitalism's World Disorder

WORKING-CLASS POLITICS AT THE MILLENNIUM

Jack Barnes

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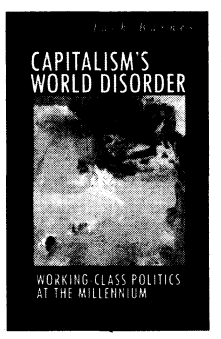

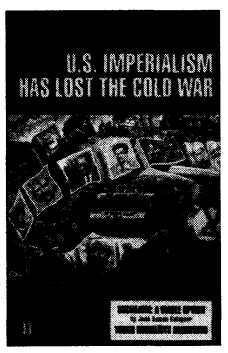

In *New International* no. 11

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Palestinian struggle thwarts U.S. attempts to 'settle' Mideast

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

The depth of support among workers and peasants in the Mideast for the determined and increasingly effective resistance of the Palestinian people has been registered in several recent developments, including a visit to the White House by a governmental delegation from Saudi Arabia. Collaboration between Washington and Riyadh has become part of a renewed imperialist push to try to force the Palestinian leadership to reign in the resistance.

Such efforts have been thwarted by the combativity of the Palestinians, who have steadfastly refused to reconcile themselves to their permanent dispossession by colonial-settler Israel. New reports from the Israeli occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip indicate a deepening of actions and determination to fight, especially by younger generations of the Palestinian population.

In a case of the tail wagging the dog, the Israeli government continues to escalate its attacks, in defiance of Washington's calls for "restraint." On April 29 Israeli tanks rolled into Hebron, the only West Bank town that was spared the earlier sweeping military incursions. The latest Israeli assault has taken at least nine Palestinian lives, while 150 Palestinians have been arrested.

In spite of an Israeli cover-up, facts continue to emerge on the extent of the battle waged by Palestinians in the Jenin refugee camp against the tank- and bulldozer-equipped Israeli armed forces. Israeli soldiers, 23 of whom were killed in the fighting, have "expressed grudging admiration for a mostly unseen enemy that had meticulously planned for the assault, stockpiling ammunition, food and medical supplies as well as crude but effective bombs," reported the April 26 *Washington Post.*

One reservist told the *Post* that the Israeli troops were told to "put a bullet in each [Palestinian] window." The big-business paper reported "a lack of preparation by Israeli reservists. They were hastily mustered from civilian life less than two weeks before, and were told to expect a Palestinian surrender within three days." One reservist said, "We were told specifically that once the Palestinians see the tanks, they'll give up."

Another soldier admitted that "I can't be contemptuous of them. Somebody there had thought very much what to do and how to fight and succeeded for 10 or 11 days against a very big army."

Protests throughout region

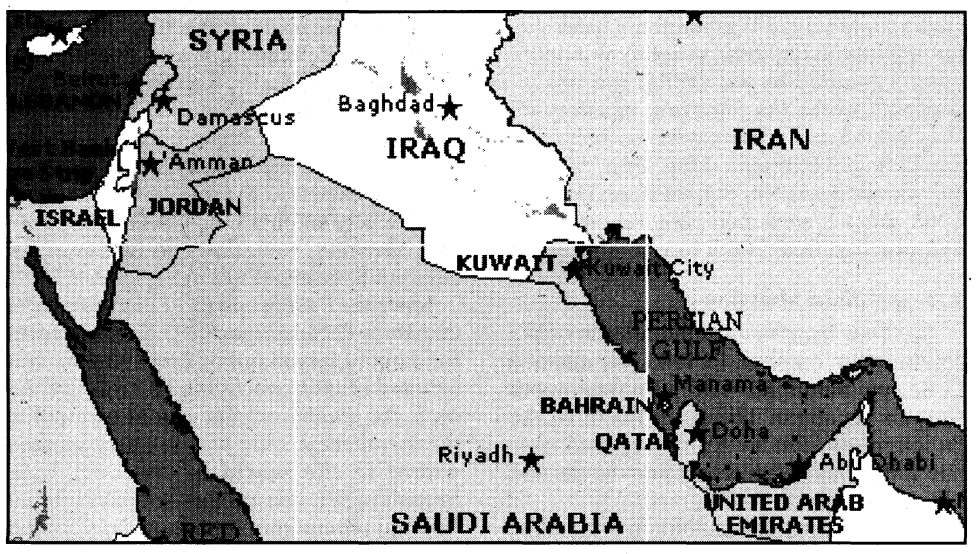
Working people and youth in nearly every country in the region, inspired by the Palestinian resistance in the occupied territories, have taken to the streets in solidarity. In a number of countries, such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia, marchers have defied police assaults and standing prohibitions on demonstrations.

Palestinians have also taken to the streets in many other countries, including the United States, where they led off protests of some 75,000 on April 20 in Washington and 20,000 San Francisco, the largest-ever such mobilizations in U.S. history. Protests have been reported in Indonesia, many European countries, Canada, New Zealand, and elsewhere.

The impact of the deepening Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the Middle East, and the solidarity it is winning among workers and farmers of the region, is also registered in other ways. In late April a group of 120 Saudi scholars and writers issued an open letter condemning U.S. and Israeli policy, and calling on the Saudi government to "make the American administration feel that its huge interests in the Arab region are also threatened." As the London-based *Economist* magazine commented, "That is about as direct a call as is possible in the kingdom for the closure of America's military bases there." The Pentagon maintains a dozen bases and 30,000 troops in the Arab-Persian Gulf. The U.S. air force alone operates from bases in Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrain, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia.

In the Syrian capital of Damascus, where hundreds of thousands of people have mounted daily demonstrations against Israeli and U.S. policy, the U.S. Consul was banned from one upmarket restaurant. The owner told him, "your presence does not honor us as a representative of the American government that adopts pro-Israeli positions. You are persona non grata and you should leave."

Fearful of the unrest and destabilizing impact of the protests by working people, representatives of Middle Eastern governments have expressed concerns at the openly pro-Israeli stance of the U.S. government, and have appealed to Washington to use its influence to "settle" the conflict. With young people giving their lives to battle the Israeli regime, the capitalist governments in the Mideast are having an increasingly hard time justifying to workers and farmers their own inaction.

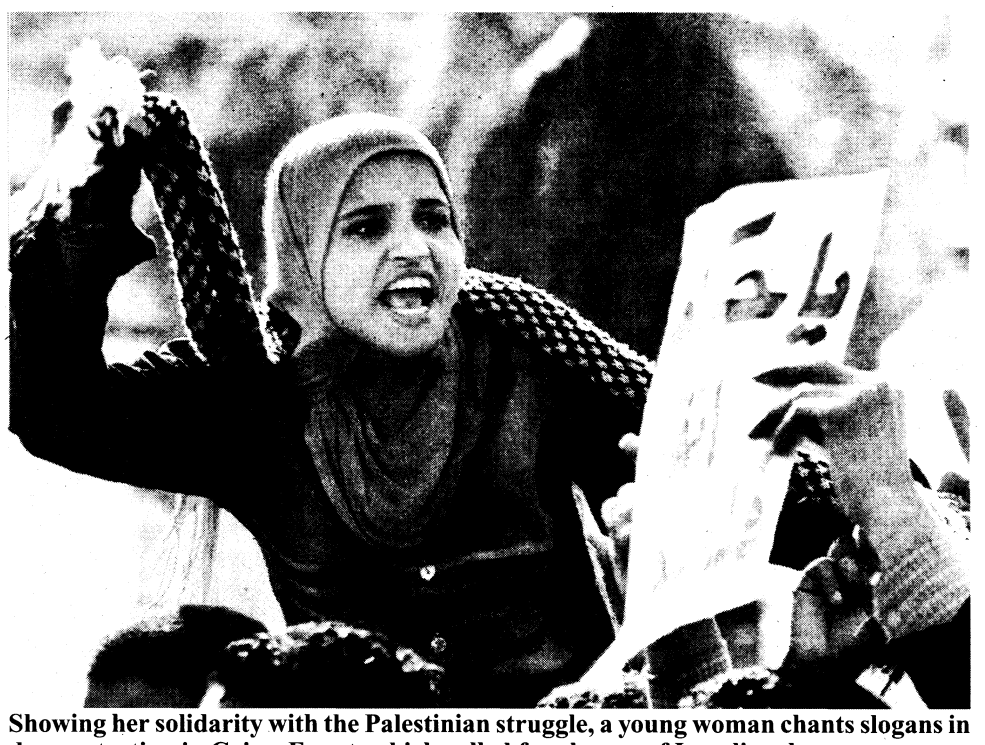


"Where is the pressure from the U.S. on [Israeli prime minister Ariel] Sharon?" said Amr Mousa, the secretary general of the Arab League, on April 30. "Why should the Arabs put pressure on [Palestinian Authority leader Yasir] Arafat without equal pressure being put on Sharon?"

Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak used his May Day speech to criticize the Bush administration for legitimizing Tel Aviv's "comparison between the U.S. war on terrorism in Afghanistan and Israel's war against unarmed Palestinians who are resisting occupation." The *New York Times* noted that the leaders of Egypt and Jordan have "resorted to lowering their public profiles" in the face of growing criticism of the "peace treaties" they have signed with Israel.

Visit by Saudi Arabian officials

This was the context for the April 25 talks between U.S. president George Bush and a Saudi delegation that included Abdullah, the country's crown prince. Abdullah reportedly warned of "grave consequences" if Washington failed to curb the ongoing Israeli military campaign in the Palestinian territories. Failure to accomplish this, he said, according to the *Times*, would mean "an intense spiral of violence that would result in a complete collapse of security and stability in the region"—code words for the regimes' inability to keep working people under control.



Showing her solidarity with the Palestinian struggle, a young woman chants slogans in demonstration in Cairo, Egypt, which called for closure of Israeli embassy.

The meeting followed discussions by Bush over the previous week with the kings of Jordan and Morocco, and the prime minister of Lebanon.

Following the Saudi visit, the *Times* reported that a "division of labor" had been established, with U.S. officials talking to Israeli prime minister Sharon about "breaking the psychology of violence," while Arab officials would "do the same at a meeting with Yasir Arafat."

"Arab leaders," continued the report, "are expected to press Mr. Arafat to accept an unprecedented level of supervision, assistance and guidance in rebuilding the Palestinian Authority, whose security forces will be instructed to crack down on terrorists and cooperate with Israeli and Western intelligence in preventing terrorism."

Commenting on a proposal for a Washington-dominated international "peace conference" involving a number of imperialist powers, as well as Russia, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Morocco, Prince Sayud al-Faisal, the Saudi foreign minister, said that "good things are happening for a change." The *Times* claimed that the conference would aim to fulfill "the vision of a Palestinian state."

Two days earlier the White House had announced that the Israeli government had agreed to Arafat's release from his Ramallah offices, where he has been trapped for a month. Tel Aviv agreed on condition that four members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) accused of assassinating Israel's tourism minister would be held in a Palestinian prison with U.S. and British guards. A Palestinian Authority military court convicted the four of the killing.

"Chairman Arafat is now free to move around and free to lead, and we expect him to do so," said Bush.

Dissent among Bush supporters

The White House's deepening involvement in the Palestinian conflict has prompted growing criticism among prominent conservative and right-wing supporters of the administration and the Republican Party. A number argue that this course weakens the position of the Israeli rulers and undermines Washington's preparations for an assault on Iraq. They express fear that the U.S. rulers' "war on terror"—the banner attached to attacks on workers' rights inside the United States and to military aggression abroad—has lost momentum.

"This is not the time for peace missions and negotiations," wrote Jeff Jacoby in the April 24 *Conservative Chronicle.* "The way to end the war in the West Bank is not to make Israel retreat but to let it fight its way to a decisive victory."

The *Wall Street Journal* editorialized on April 17 that "since Mr. Bush entered the Palestinian bazaar to restrain Israel two weeks ago, his own standing has fallen with all parties." Such efforts, argued the paper, would only be justified if they were able to "calm Palestine long enough to get on with the main business of Saddam."

Lamenting the administration's "foray into peace-processing," the editors of the *National Review* stated May 6, "The administration has leaked away prestige and creditability with nearly every new statement, and has bent to the logic of the Arab world, which is that nothing can ever be done in the Middle East without bullying Israel first."

Saudi Arabia is "really almost an enemy at this stage," said New York Republican Congressman Peter King several days before Abdullah's visit. "I think perhaps it's time to consider actually stopping immigration from countries which harbor terrorists and countries which do not fully comply with us on terrorism," he said in a radio interview. "That would include most of the Arab states, quite frankly."

In a April 19 piece, published in townhall.com, entitled "U.S. should not take their eye off Iraq," longtime *Washington Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer described Washington's involvement in the Mideast diplomacy as a "distraction."

"It muddies the very principles of the Bush Doctrine," he wrote, to call for Israeli withdrawal in the middle of its "decisive counterrattack."

"Time is running short" for an attack on Iraq," wrote Krauthammer. "This idea that we cannot fight Iraq without a consensus of Arab states behind us is absurd. We need two countries, Kuwait in the south and Turkey in the north," he wrote.

Veteran *New York Times* columnist William Safire was also dismissive of attempts to construct a "coat-holding coalition of craven caliphs" in preparing to overthrow Iraqi president Saddam Hussein. "We have already had to begin abandoning our bases in Saudi Arabia. Joining us in liberating Iraq" —i.e. pulverizing the country and its people with imperialist airpower, tanks, and artillery—"will be Brits, Turks, and Kurds."

Exhaustion of war fever

In also bemoaning the loss of momentum in the imperialist war drive at home and abroad, but speaking in defense of the White House's current course, one administration official noted the exhaustion of the war fever whipped up by the U.S. rulers after September 11. "The lesson of the past month," said the functionary, "is that September 11 was so horrific that it made for easy choices, almost all of which are behind us. And everything ahead—Israel, the Palestinians, Iraq, even dealing with our fair-weather friends in Europe—doesn't fit that template."

As part of administration efforts to answer the criticisms of its supporters, and to prepare public opinion for an offensive against Iraq, a Defense Department official told the April 28 *Times* that plans have been drawn up for a "heavy air and land assault" in 2003. The blueprint includes "rough numbers of troops, ranging from a minimum of about 70,000 to 100,000...to a top of 250,000.... Other than troops from Britain, no significant contribution of allied forces is anticipated."

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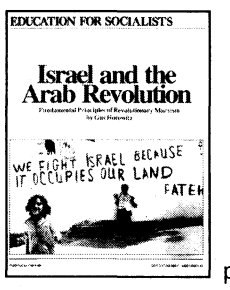

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Palestinians and fight for national liberation

Reprinted below are excerpts from the lead article in *New International* no. 7, "The Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq," by Jack Barnes, who is national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. The issue was published a few months after the end of the 1990–91 Gulf war. The excerpt is copyright © 1991 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp., reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*. Footnotes are in original.

BY JACK BARNES

Communists have no trouble in recognizing the need for unconditional solidarity with an oppressed nation against imperialist attack, regardless of the class character of its government, as we've proven once again during the Gulf war. At the same time, communists and other vanguard fighters for true national independence and sovereignty—whether in Iraq or anywhere else in the region—must recognize and act on the fact that there are conflicting classes within these oppressed nations.

The Palestinians are among the biggest victims of the fakery of the bourgeois governments in the region, all of which falsely claim to speak and act in their interests. These blows were dealt to the Palestinians not just by the treacherous Egyptian, Syrian, and Saudi regimes—or by the desperate King Hussein of Jordan, who will turn his guns on the Palestinians again, if he finds it expedient, just as he did in September 1970.[1] No less damage was done by the reactionary demagogy of Baghdad, which postured as the champion of the Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim peoples, while in practice it sapped their capacity for anti-imperialist struggle. Baghdad cynically called for "linkage" of Iraq's partial withdrawal from Kuwait with the Palestinians' demands for national self-determination.

The leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization also did great harm to the Palestinian struggle by endorsing this demagogic, after-the-fact linkage. This tailing after Baghdad left PLO leaders politically disarmed to explain the real linkage that does exist with the Palestinian struggle; the pressing need for action in solidarity with Iraq in the face of imperialist assault; the reactionary character of Baghdad's brutal invasion of Kuwait; and the fight against imperialism throughout the region and the world.

The failure of the PLO to chart such a revolutionary course is a reflection of its growing bourgeoisification. This evolution was revealed more clearly by the U.S. aggression in the Gulf, but it was not caused by the war. The political retreat by the central PLO leadership has been under way for some time.

Fighters inside 'Greater Israel'

A political toll has been taken over the past ten or fifteen years by the continued dispersion of the Palestinian people. A whole layer of Palestinian youth have grown up outside the historic lands of Palestine. A PLO apparatus has been built up throughout countries in the Middle East and North Africa hosted and financed by the bourgeois regimes in the region. A few factions of the PLO have become willing tools in the hands of these governments. The blows dealt to the PLO forces in Lebanon over the past decade by the Israeli regime, by the Syrian regime, and by the various Lebanese bourgeois political forces—these have had an additional disorienting and demoralizing impact on layers of the leadership, turning their eyes further away from the ranks of the Palestinian masses inside and outside Israel. The gap has grown between the PLO apparatus and the young Palestinian fighters inside the borders of "Greater Israel," where the liberation fight has been centered more and more.

But this is not a finished process. The PLO remains a revolutionary-nationalist movement with a predominantly petty-bourgeois leadership. The outcome of the PLO's political evolution remains intertwined with the living struggle of the Palestinian people, who have not been cowed or defeated. More of the leadership of the Palestinian movement has shifted to the occupied West Bank, to Gaza, to Jerusalem, and to inside Israel's pre-1967 borders—especially since the beginning of the intifada more than three years ago. More of the leadership is being taken by those who are pressing forward the fight for land, for equality, for national self-determination, for a fully sovereign Palestinian state, and who in doing so are helping to change the world....

The battle for national liberation has gone through a particular evolution and important changes as the twentieth century has unfolded. These cumulative developments have altered the class character and caliber of the leadership necessary to take the next steps in the struggle against imperialist domination, semifeudal oppression, and capitalist exploitation.

Only fifty years ago, with the outbreak of World War II, a great movement for decolonization began to sweep the world. At the opening of that war, the vast majority of what are today independent countries were colonies. When the United Nations was launched at the close of the war in late 1945, it initially had only 51 members; today there are 159.

This political independence was not granted by the imperialist colonizers out of the goodness of their hearts. Independence was conquered through struggle—by the peoples of India and Iraq to throw off British rule; by the Indochinese, Algerian, and Syrian peoples against French rule; by the Filipino people against U.S. colonial rule; by the Indonesian people against Dutch imperialism; by the Congolese people against Belgian colonialism; by the peoples of Angola and Mozambique against Portu-

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[1] In September 1970, King Hussein's army, with the support of Tel Aviv and Washington, launched an all-out attack on Palestinian refugee camps and communities in Jordan, aiming to blunt the growing militancy of the Palestinian freedom fighters and maintain stable relations with Israel. More than eight thousand Palestinians were killed in the assault, a massacre that has become known as "Black September."

Actions across globe back Palestinians' fight

South Africa: 10,000 rally in Cape Town

BY OMARI MUSA

PITTSBURGH—Nearly 10,000 people participated in a rally denouncing the Israeli government's war against the Palestinian people in Cape Town, South Africa, April 21. A month earlier, the Palestine Action Group (PAG) organized a protest of more than 1,000 demanding the South African government sever diplomatic ties with Israel by recalling its ambassador.

The PAG also called on the South African government to institute sanctions against Israel and end all arms deals with Israel, and investigate South Africans being recruited into the Israeli Defense Force.

The April 21 demonstration was organized by the Rally for Palestine Committee. It includes the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC), the Islamic Unity Convention, and the Muslim Youth Movement and Qibla.

Among the speakers at the rally was Ronnie Kasrils, an African National Congress (ANC) leader and minister of water affairs and forestry. Others included ANC Western Cape leader Ebrahim Rasool, Congress of South African Trade Unions general secretary for the Western Cape Tony Ehrenreich, and MJC leader Ihfaan Hendricks.

Kasrils has come under heavy attack from supporters of the Israeli offensive. He has spoken at various rallies and protests against the assault on West Bank areas. In a statement distributed at a December 28 vigil, Kasrils called on Israel to immediately withdraw from occupied Palestinian areas and to recognize Palestine as a sovereign independent country that has the right to exist side-by-side with its neighbor. Kasrils is Jewish.

South Africa's president, Thabo Mbeki, has also drawn fire from the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. Mbeki was quoted on South African television as describing the attack on Yasir Arafat's headquarters in Ramallah as "an attack on Palestine by Israel." Board chairperson Russell Gaddin stated, "We are appalled at this one-sided call. We believe that, unaccompanied by a similar call by the president to end the unbridled acts of terror against the Israeli civilian population, Mr. Mbeki compromises South Africa's officially stated policy of evenhandedness in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

The rally passed a resolution for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian areas. Like other protests, it also called for an international force to "protect Palestinians."

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) released a statement April 25 that said the "South African government should cut ties with Israel immediately." It also called for a "boycott of all Israeli goods." COSATU secretary general Zwelinzima Vavi noted, "We are asking our members to refuse handling goods from Israel." The union official said COSATU would also organize demonstrations at the Israeli embassy in South Africa until the ambassador is recalled.

Actions in Scotland

BY REBECCA HUTCHINSON

GLASGOW, Scotland—Demonstrations in solidarity with the Palestinian people condemning the brutal Israeli assault on the West Bank are taking place across Scotland. Protests involving 3,000 people have been organized in Aberdeen, Dundee, and Edinburgh in recent weeks.

On April 27 more than 1,000 people marched through the city center here in an action called by the Scottish Coalition for Justice Not War. The demonstration was a confident and vocal expression of support for the Palestinian resistance to the Israeli invasion of Palestinian towns and refugee camps. The tone was set with the arrival of a contingent from Glasgow's Southside. Led by young women wearing the "hegheb," a Moslem head-dress, they were welcomed with cheers as they marched up to the assembly point at George Square chanting, "Allah al Aqbar" and "Victory to the Intifada."

Other popular chants on the march were, "No justice, no peace" and "Tony Blair: terrorist! George Bush: terrorist!" Many people carried placards demanding an end to the Israeli occupation and opposing the war against Iraq. A number of contingents displayed the Scottish flag alongside the Palestinian flag.

The marchers sat down for several minutes in front of the recruitment center for the Armed Forces on Queen Street. Soldiers from Scottish-based units like the Royal Marines 45 Commando are currently deployed as part of the imperialist occupation of Afghanistan.

At the end of the march speakers addressed a rally in George Square. Many of those listening most attentively were young people who had come along to express their opposition to the Israeli occupations and their solidarity with the Palestinian fighters. A young man carrying a Palestinian flag told this reporter they were present to oppose "Bush and Blair going into Iraq when they feel like it. It's like Palestine. You have to raise your voice to give support."

The loudest cheers from young people at the rally came when Aamer Anwar, of the Chhokar Family Justice Campaign, explained the answer he gives to people who express doubts about the Palestinian fighters known as "suicide bombers." Anwar said he explains that "when all you have left is your life then that is what you will sacrifice."

Participants were encouraged to join a march on the Scottish Parliament May 1, to back the demands: "Stop Israeli state error: End the 35-year occupation now."

Militant/Marie-Claire David

Rally in Montreal drew wide participation and official union endorsement

Union federations back Quebec protest

BY JOANNE PRITCHARD

MONTREAL—More than 7,500 people marched here in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle April 27. The protest was organized by the Coalition for Justice and Peace in Palestine. The coalition includes two major Quebec union federations, the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN) and the Quebec Union Central (CSQ), as well as the Muslim Council of Montreal, Solidarity for Human Rights in Palestine, the Quebec Women's Federation, and Palestinians and Jews United Against the Occupation.

After gathering at the Israeli consulate, participants marched through downtown Montreal to a federal building. The action was the fruit of efforts by a new layer of Palestinian activists over the past few years to win support for their struggle from wider layers of the population in Quebec. Palestine was colonized by the United Kingdom and most Palestinians speak English as a second language. Alongside the Palestinian and Lebanese flags, the next most popular national flag at this march was Quebec's. The slogans and speeches were in French, English, and Arabic. One of the popular slogans was *Québec-Palestine, solidarité!*

Elinia Cielo, who is a member of the Chilean Committee for Human Rights, carried a Chilean flag and explained that she had just returned from Chile where she had participated in demonstrations in solidarity with the Palestinians. A sticker worn by many marchers read "Today we are all Palestinian."

Abdel Salam Men'yawi, representing the Muslim Council of Montreal, acknowledged the broader participation in the demonstration. "Thank-you, *merci*, for coming out in spite of the massive disinformation campaign against the Palestinians." He added, "It was not right that Canada voted against the UN resolution condemning Israeli crimes" and demanded that the government "stop eroding our freedoms and civil liberties."

Bruce Katz, from Palestinians and Jews United, said that thousands of Jews around the world, including in Israel, denounced the occupation of Palestine. He explained that anti-Semitism is a form of racism like any other, such as that practiced against the Palestinians in Israel.

Also speaking were Marc Laviolette, the president of the CSN; Daniel Lachance, vice president of the CSQ; and Vivienne Barbot, president of the Québec Women's Federation. Many of the speakers called for United Nations troops to be sent to the region to protect the Palestinians. But in the opinion of a number of young demonstrators such as Georges Abaje who goes to Brebeuf College, "That's not going to work. The UN is controlled by the United States and they support Israel."

Joanne Pritchard is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 500.

Palestinians and fight for national liberation

Continued from Page 11
guese rule; and many others.

If you don't count Hong Kong as a colony—and I don't anymore; its rapid integration into China is not only a foregone conclusion, but actually running ahead of the scheduled 1997 formalities—then the largest colony left in the world today is Puerto Rico. If anything, this fact increases the importance of the anticolonial struggles that remain to be settled, particularly of numerous islands in the Caribbean, the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, and so on. But the scope of the post-World War II decolonization conquests is impressive.

While in each case there were landlords, merchant capitalists, and other indigenous exploiters who collaborated with the colonial powers to the bitter end, the decolonization movements nonetheless mobilized broad united fronts behind the fight for national independence. Representatives of different classes, with directly counterposed social interests, carried substantial weight in these battles.

Independence struggles were fought and led to victory under leaderships that were often bourgeois or petty bourgeois both in program and social composition. The workers and peasants were the most self-sacrificing fighters, the courageous battalions without whom the battle could not have been won. But the dominant political leaderships were not proletarian or communist in the vast majority of cases. Most of the regimes that came to power were bourgeois, not workers' and peasants' governments.

The victories of the decolonization movement gave an impulse to a second set of conquests in the struggle for national liberation—ones that were often intertwined with the anticolonial fight itself. This was the struggle to wrest back from direct ownership by imperialist interests the most basic resources and infrastructure—the national patrimony—of countries in the Third World. These struggles marked much of the 1950s and '60s, and continued even into the late 1970s with the Iranian revolution.

Workers and peasants press struggles

In 1956 the Egyptian government headed by Gamal Abdel Nasser took back the Suez Canal from British and French finance capital, for example. Regimes throughout the Middle East, Latin America, and elsewhere nationalized oil fields and mineral rights. Class lines in these battles were drawn more sharply than in the decolonization battles themselves, since layers of native exploiters had economic interests that were directly tied to major imperialist-owned banks and monopolies. Workers and peasants often took advantage of these confrontations with imperialism to press demands on the neocolonial regimes for land reform and labor rights, and in the process won some greater space to organize and practice politics.

But in the big majority of cases these resources taken from the direct domination and exploitation of the imperialists were transferred to the domination of local, rising capitalist classes, either directly to private owners or indirectly through the neocolonial regimes they controlled. Once again, the conflicts that culminated in the nationalization of these former imperialist properties were carried through largely by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships and without the establishment of workers' and peasants' regimes.

The most pressing tasks that confront workers and peasants in most of the Third World today, however, require a different class character and caliber of leadership if they are to succeed. The tasks of national liberation, of carrying through to the end the liberation of the toilers from imperialist domination and superexploitation, cannot be advanced short of a struggle against the local capitalist and landlord classes, whose interests are completely intertwined with those of the imperialists. Thus, the political challenges before national liberation movements in tackling this next set of historic tasks require greater political clarity and working-class leadership.

That's the road forward to lasting economic and social development. That's how to rid these countries of social structures and institutions that ensure their permanent subjugation to imperialism. That's the only way to prevent the gains from even limited economic and social development from ending up in the hands of a thin layer of capitalists, the government bureaucracy, and the military officer corps, while the vast majority of workers and peasants are driven into deeper impoverishment and brutally repressed when they resist. That's the only way to carry through land reforms that are thoroughgoing and that don't—through the mechanism of the capitalist rents and mortgages system, and domination over credit, marketing arrangements, and sources of agricultural equipment and supplies—simply end up reproducing massive landlessness and class differentiation in the countryside.

Crisis of the imperialist system

These pressing tasks confronting anti-imperialist fighters in most semicolonial countries today are the product of the crisis of the imperialist system itself, of the failure of capitalism. It is capitalism that has robbed workers and peasants the world over who fought courageously—and at great sacrifice—for their national independence, only to find themselves today the debt slaves of imperialist banks. Only to find themselves still subject to the dictates of the great oil cartels, the giant merchants of grain, and other imperialist interests.

The imperialist enemy can no longer be fought successfully in the same ways as in past decades. Colonial independence has been achieved in most countries. The national patrimony of land and other mineral resources has been nationalized in many cases.

In the most direct and immediate sense, the problem for the toilers is not that the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties and organizations are ineffective as instruments in the struggle for socialism; that's always true. But the social reality that above all poses the demand for working-class leadership is that the bourgeois ruling classes have become the main prop of imperialist domination of these countries at this point in history, even if in great conflict with this or that imperialist power for periods of time. So it is impossible to carry through to completion the struggle for national liberation under their leadership; they have to be fought against and replaced....

The kind of struggle necessary to take on the next tasks of national liberation requires the organization of the workers and peasants politically independent of the capitalists and landlords, who block the progress and development of the nation. It requires a strong worker-peasant alliance. It requires the fight for political space to organize and engage in struggles.

It requires an internationalist orientation toward the battles of other toilers, not only elsewhere in the Third World but in the imperialist countries and throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. It requires an anticapitalist program and proletarian leadership. And it requires the fight to replace the current neocolonial bourgeois regimes with workers' and peasants' governments.

This is why we are convinced (1) that struggles to carry through national liberation to the end will be a stronger, not a weaker, force in world politics in coming years; and (2) that in the great majority of these countries, to be an effective revolutionist today and tomorrow is to be a communist. Over the past three decades we have seen how such leadership can and will develop in the course of revolutionary struggles against national oppression.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

ALABAMA
Birmingham

Free the Five Cuban Revolutionaries Held in U.S. Prisons. Speaker: Brian Taylor, Socialist Workers Party, member, United Mine Workers Local 2133. Fri., May. 10, 7:00 p.m. *3029-A Bessemer Road. Donation: $4. Tel: (205) 780-0021.*

NEW JERSEY
Newark

Defend Immigrant Rights and Workers' Rights. Justice for Santiago Villanueva. Speaker: Sarah Harris, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 3, 7:30 p.m. *506 Springfield Ave., 3rd Floor. Donation: $4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.*

NEW YORK
Brooklyn

The Meaning of the Elections in France. Speaker: Paul Pederson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 3, 7:30 p.m.

Roots of the Crisis in the Catholic Church. Speaker: Angel Lariscy, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 10, 7:30 p.m. *Both events at 372A 53rd St. (at 4th Ave.) Donation: $5. Tel: (718) 567-8014.*

Garment District

U.S. Navy Out of Vieques. Speaker: Ellen Brickley, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 3, 7:30 p.m.

The Meaning of the French Elections for Working People. Speaker: Bill Schmidt, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 10, 7:30 p.m. *545 8th Avenue, 14th Floor. Donation: $4. Tel: (212) 695-7358.*

Upper Manhattan

End U.S. Aid to the Israeli Regime; For a Democratic, Secular Palestine. Speaker: Emily Fitzsimmons. Fri., May 3, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:00 p.m. *599 W. 187th Street, 2nd Floor. Donation: $5 each for program and dinner. Tel: (212) 740-4611.*

PENNSYLVANIA
Philadelphia

Korea: the Fight for Reunification. Fri., May 10, 7:30 p.m.

The Fight for Equal Rights for Immigrants. Fri., May 17, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:00 p.m. *Both events at 5237 N. 5th Street. Donation: $5 each for forum and dinner. Tel: (215) 324-7020.*

AUSTRALIA
Sydney

Release the Guantánamo Prisoners. Speaker: Linda Harris, Communist League, and member of Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union. Sun., May 12, 4:00 p.m.

The Crisis in Australian Health Care. Speaker: Joanne Kuniansky, Communist League, member, Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union. Sun., May 19, 4:00 p.m.

Both events: 1st floor, 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie. Donation: $4. Tel: (02) 9718-9698.

CANADA
Toronto

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Boycott the Anti-Native Referendum. Fri., May 10, 7:30 p.m. *2645 East Hastings, 2nd Floor. Tel: (604) 872-8343.*

—CALENDAR—

PENNSYLVANIA
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First Contract Signed: Celebrate Victory by Kaolin Mushroom Workers. Sat., May 11, 4:00 p.m. *Kennett Square. Tel: (856) 881-2507.*

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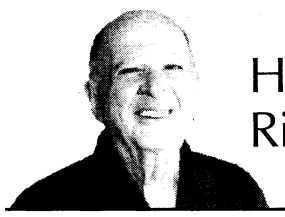


Harry Ring

Organic living—The *Los Angeles Times*'s real estate feature "Home of the Week" chose a house said to be "free of formaldehyde, fiberglass fumes, pollutants, particulates, mold and other toxins....Potable water is filtered for bathing and laundering as well as for drinking." Asking price: $6.95 million.

Not quite organic—We reported on the century-old tenement building on New York's Lower East Side, which has been doing nicely as a tenement museum. In fact it's been doing so well that the owner is trying to expand the museum by taking over the twin building next door. There, 15 apartments are each yielding $1,600 a month in rent. (Astounding? Not in New York.) Understandably, the owners don't want to sell. The museum owner is working to get the building declared in the public domain so she can gobble it up, evict the residents, and double the museum capacity.

Oops—The Enron mega-swindlers tried to look a bit embarrassed when they 'fessed up that their claimed assets may have been overstated by up to $24 billion. So, while the "assets" figure is a crock, one figure remains hard—5,600 Enron employees have been booted out.

...meanwhile—"...critics say the first of the post-Enron pension measures to reach the House floor actually opens up fresh loopholes. Some of the bill's provisions would lead companies to seek to reduce the number of employees covered by pensions and give proportionately larger pension benefits to the most highly paid executives."—*New York Times,* April 10.

Didn't start with 'experts'?—"The Nebraska Public Power District approved nearly $4 million to improve its Cooper Nuclear Station, which is rated one of the two lowest in the USA. The money will be used to hire experts to remedy what the Nuclear Regulatory Commission says are repeated problems with emergency preparedness."—News item.

Let 'em learn to swim—"Davenport, Iowa—A study by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers says Davenport's water treatment plant is the only feasible candidate for permanent flood protection. Protecting the rest of downtown isn't worth the cost, according to a draft report."—News item.

Greed unlimited—"In 1989 companies contributed 70 percent of new money going into retirement programs, according to the U.S. Labor Dept. By 1998 that percentage had slipped to 50 percent. In 1999 or 2000 the contribution of workers to retirement plans...surpassed company payments."—Omaha *World-Herald.*

Shrewd guess—The number of people in Iowa receiving food stamps increased 12.1 percent last year. Officials blamed it on a "weak economy."

Thought for the week—"The war on terrorism is the full employment act for these guys."—D.B. Des Roches, Pentagon agent for the mercenary force being assembled to take over training the U.S. selected Afghan forces to be.

Seattle action protests cop killing of truck driver

BY ERNEST MAILHOT

SEATTLE—Two hundred people who had attended the funeral of Robert Lee Thomas, Sr., a 59-year-old African-American truck driver, marched from Mount Zion Baptist Church to the King County Courthouse where the Sheriff's offices are located. Thomas was gunned down by off-duty King County deputy sheriff Melvin Miller only days before. On their way to the courthouse marchers entered Interstate 5, the main highway through downtown Seattle, and blocked rush-hour traffic for almost an hour.

Thomas, his son, and his son's girlfriend were driving in a new pickup truck to a friend's home for breakfast April 7 when they got lost in a predominantly white suburb just south of Seattle. Thomas and his son are Black and his son's girlfriend is white. Thomas pulled over to the side of the road to get his bearings.

Supposedly alerted by a neighbor who didn't like the truck and its occupants being in the area, Miller, who lives in the neighborhood, approached the truck. He was in civilian clothes and demanded they drive off. Thomas Jr., not knowing he was talking to a cop, asked for Miller's name. According to Gina-Marie Munnell, Thomas Jr.'s girlfriend who was in the back seat, the cop then said, "One chance is the only chance you have. Take it up the street."

Miller then drew his gun and fired three times into the truck killing Thomas Sr. and wounding his son in the hand. Thomas Jr. and Munnell said Miller didn't identify himself as a cop before he killed Thomas Sr.

Miller claims he was forced to shoot after the elder Thomas aimed a gun at him. The cops claim to have found in the truck a gun, which had not been fired and had previously been reported stolen. Both Thomas Jr. and Munnell deny that Thomas Sr. produced a gun. At a press conference on April 18 Bradley Marshall, the Thomas family's attorney, suggested the gun the cops say was found in Thomas Sr.'s hand could have been planted and that the cop might have seen a cell phone in Thomas's hand and thought it was a gun.

The big-business media in Seattle joined in the police campaign to criminalize the victim of this latest police killing of a Black working person here. On April 11 the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* printed a front page story titled, "Man killed by officer had criminal history." The article refers to run-ins with the police and an assault conviction against Thomas, the latest of which is from 1984.

The police claimed Thomas was part of a biker gang and that the three in the truck had been partying and on drugs the day that Thomas was killed. Relatives and friends point out that Thomas Sr. was a motorcycle enthusiast who belonged to the Magic Wheels Motorcycle Club, a Seattle group. They also point out that both Thomases as truck drivers face regular drug testing and do not use drugs.

The first articles in the press after the murder of Thomas said that no drug paraphernalia had been found in the truck. Days later, without reporting the contradiction with previous reports, the press reported that drug items had been found in the truck.

Three days after the cop killing of Thomas, the Seattle police arrested Gina-Marie Munnell on an outstanding warrant as she was on her way to the Mount Zion Baptist Church to make funeral arrangements for Thomas Sr.

While some of Miller's neighbors have defended the cop, others have said that he regularly harasses people who park on the road and local residents if he thinks they are playing music too loudly.

On April 18 Charles Mandigo, head of the Seattle FBI office, announced that the federal cop agency would be investigating the police killing of Thomas. Indirectly referring to the anger in the Black community over the killing, Mandigo said the FBI's "public acknowledgment of its pending investigation was made in response to intense public interest."

Anger in the Black community here has been fueled by a series of police killings of Blacks in the city. In the past year this has included Shawn Maxwell, who cops gunned down claiming he threatened them with a sword. Last May Aaron Roberts was shot to death by police who claimed the unarmed man was using his car as a weapon. Several protests occurred after the killing of Roberts.

Larry Dean, who with his two sons was in the protest march after the Thomas funeral, pointed to the racist nature of the police killing of Thomas and others. "If [Thomas] was a white man, he [Miller] talks him down. There is no problem. There is no gun." Marchers in the protest of Thomas' murder vowed to continue their demonstrations.

Ernest Mailhot is a meat packer and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 81.

High court rejects Texas writer's appeal

BY STEVE WARSHELL

HOUSTON—The United States Supreme Court on April 15 refused to hear the appeal of freelance writer Vanessa Leggett of her 168-day imprisonment on contempt of court charges for refusing to obey a grand jury subpoena to reveal confidential sources for a forthcoming book. The court made no comment in rejecting the case.

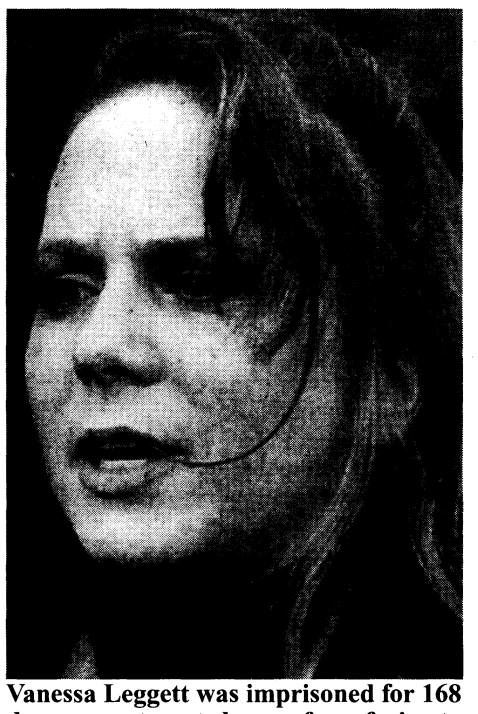
Leggett was jailed in the Federal Detention Center in Houston last July on a civil contempt charge after she refused to provide the grand jury with her notes and tapes of interviews conducted over the course of four years of research into the 1997 shooting death of Houston socialite Doris Angleton.

Leggett's attorney, Michael DeGeurin, argued that she was protected by a reporter's constitutional privilege against revealing confidential sources, but two federal courts disagreed.

The writer was released January 4 when the grand jury's term expired. Shortly after her release from jail, a new grand jury indicted Robert Angleton for murder-for-hire in the death of his wife. Angleton has already been cleared of murder charges by a state court. A hearing is pending in federal district court on Angleton's motion to dismiss the charges.

According to a report from the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, U.S. Solicitor General Theodore Olson argued to the Supreme Court that Leggett's release from jail made her appeal moot. But Leggett countered that she could be subpoenaed to testify at Angleton's trial, and would face another contempt citation and more jail time if she did not comply.

Leggett's appeal urged the Supreme Court to clarify the law surrounding a journalist's First Amendment privilege to protect confidential sources. Federal courts apply the law unequally, resulting in disparate treatment for news gatherers across the country, her appeal said. She also argued that the subpoena, which sought all copies of her research, would leave her unable to work on her book. As such, a grand jury subpoena amounted to an unconstitutional prior restraint, the appeal said.



Vanessa Leggett was imprisoned for 168 days on contempt charges for refusing to turn over to a grand jury confidential sources for a forthcoming book.

The April 15 *Houston Chronicle* reported that the grand jury asked Leggett to disclose any conversations she had with certain police officers, prosecutors, and others. Robert Angleton's lawyer, Michael Ramsey, has reported rumors that the grand jury was looking for evidence of law enforcement "leaks" about the investigation rather than for information about any crimes stemming directly from Doris Angleton's shooting death.

According to the January 5 *Houston Chronicle*, FBI agents had offered to hire Leggett as a paid, confidential informant. Leggett refused and was eventually arrested and jailed.

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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

May 13, 1977

President Carter unveiled his welfare reform plan May 2. Rather than the comprehensive reorganization he had promised, he delivered a dozen "goals."

"There should be incentives to be honest and to eliminate fraud," the president pontificated in goal number ten. "The programs should be simpler and easier to administer."

But behind the vagueness and platitudes, the thrust of Carter's program is reactionary to the core.

Goal number one: "No higher initial cost than the present systems." This means no additional aid to the poor. With inflation, it means a cut in real aid.

The average state pays out $275 a month—$3,300 a year—to a family of four enrolled in Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the main welfare program. That's way below even the official government poverty level of $5,500.

Goals two, three, four, five, and seven are all roundabout ways of saying that people on welfare must accept whatever job the government offers. This is demagogy aimed at whipping up racist sentiments against "welfare bums." But of the 11.2 million people in the main welfare program, all but 700,000 are children or their mothers. And the overwhelming majority of the rest are disabled or old people.

What might Carter's plan mean in practice? In Milwaukee, welfare recipients are forced to work for the county at two dollars an hour. After taxes and job-related expenses, they take home less than forty-five dollars a week.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

May 12, 1952

May Day in Bolivia, three weeks after the revolution that overthrew the pro-Washington military dictatorship in that country, provided additional proof of the continuing conflict between the workers, whose militancy made the revolution successful, and the new government, which is dominated by the conservative leaders of the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR).

As last week's *Militant* showed in detail, the MNR leaders (President Victor Paz Estenssoro and Vice President Hernan Siles Zuazo) are fundamentally pro-capitalist in outlook and reluctant to nationalize the foreign-owned tin mines. However, they are under powerful pressures to carry out this and other measures of social transformation from the anti-imperialist masses, still armed with 10,000 rifles and machine guns and a resurgent labor movement (Central Organization of Bolivian Workers), led by Juan Lechin, Minister of Mines and Petroleum in the MNR cabinet.

The May Day event brought to the surface more of the differences between the Paz government and the labor movement and led Edward A. Morrow, *N.Y. Times* correspondent in La Paz, to conclude that Paz appears to be "facing a strong and constantly increasing opposition to his comparatively mild political and economic objectives."

Speaking to the May Day marchers, Lechin said, "It was foolish to think the revolution was ended by the taking of the Presidential Palace. It has only begun," he asserted.

The fight against N.Y. cutbacks

A fight is shaping up in New York City as Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the city council prepare measures to slash social programs, cut thousands of jobs, and squeeze some $500 million in concessions out of the public workers' unions, taking his original "share the pain" budget proposal another step further.

The mayor is using threats of putting the city under a financial control board, which in 1975 carried through a massive assault on working people in the city by cutting tens of thousands of jobs along with a range of social programs.

With a matter-of-fact efficiency, the new mayor is proving he is the man for the job the capitalist rulers of New York City need to get done. With neat charts and tidy lists, he hopes to lead the city government to methodically cut program after program—with devastating consequences for entire sections of working people in New York.

The crisis comes after years of deteriorating conditions for millions of working people in the city, who face the combination of assaults by the employers and attacks from the federal, state, and city governments.

The drive by the Clinton and Bush administrations to eliminate whole sections of the Social Security Act and begin tearing apart the social safety net that millions of workers and farmers depend on was backed by the Giuliani administration. It has forced thousands onto fake "workfare" programs.

Bloomberg's plan to slash services to the homeless, end medical services at shelters, and eliminate food programs come as a record number of children and adults are being admitted to the city's homeless shelters.

The projected cuts in education will accelerate the physical dilapidation of the already overcrowded schools and the general decline in the education system in the city.

The labor resistance and social protests taking place—from rallies by teachers to transit workers to immigrants demanding translators for public services—stand as the main obstacle in the way of the bipartisan attempt to run roughshod over working people under the guise of a "budget crisis." The actions help point the way for other workers to organize and collectively fight to defend our hard-won gains.

The transit workers' battle to maintain their health coverage should be championed by all working people. The bosses use every possible means to try to whittle away at any temporary gains wrested from them by working people—in this case claiming the plan is near "bankruptcy." Health care remains a basic right that is denied to millions of people across the country, including in New York City itself.

The fact that the attacks by the superwealthy rulers are occurring on a city, state, and federal level helps point to the need for a political fight on a national level against the depredations of capitalism. First and foremost is the battle to demand Social Security be expanded so every single person in the United States is provided cradle-to-grave health-care coverage, workers compensation, and old age pensions. In the face of layoffs and unemployment, working people can fight for full union-scale unemployment benefits and measures to force the government and employers to create jobs, such as launching a massive public works program and shortening the workweek with no cut in pay.

Equal rights for immigrants

The entire labor movement should stand behind demands for equal rights for immigrants; to end INS raids, jailings, and deportations; against moves by the government to implement a national ID card; and to limit visitors' visas to the United States.

The assaults by the Bush administration over the past six months build on the course carved out under the Clinton administration. These include indefinite detentions of immigrants rounded up by INS cops, pushing forward plans to establish a national ID card, FBI questioning of thousands of immigrants from the Middle East, snooping on students and others in the United States on legal visas, and plans to beef up the INS.

The actions in cities around the country by supporters of the rights of immigrant workers on May 1, which raised demands for the legalization of all undocumented workers and their families, the right to unionize, equal protection under the law, and equal access to social services are in the best traditions of solidarity that can be celebrated on International Workers Day.

By joining actions like those in Washington May 1, working people can become part of the battle to unite the working class in face of the bipartisan assault at home. The superwealthy ruling class seeks through divide-and-conquer tactics to defend their power and make workers and farmers bear the brunt of the world capitalist economic crisis.

In pursuing their anti–labor drive, the U.S. ruling class keeps running into the growing combativity of vanguard layers of immigrant workers who refuse to be silent and accept the second-class status the employers and their government hope to foist onto them.

Instead of allowing themselves to be relegated to a superexploited layer without legal protection and rights, immigrant workers are taking the moral high ground in defense of workers' rights and social entitlements won by through massive struggles.

At a recent demonstration in New York the message was clear. "Bloomberg. We demand equality," said demonstrators to the city's billionaire mayor, Michael Bloomberg, as they demanded equal access to social services and jobs. These struggles can only strengthen other labor battles resisting the assault on wages and working conditions by the city government.

Under the guise of "national security" concerns and the "war on terror," the Bush administration, with bipartisan support, is seeking to "improve" the effectiveness of its immigration enforcement agency by doubling the number of border patrol cops and developing a tracking system of noncitizens entering the United States.

Workers and farmers in this country can join with others in the demand to end all raids and deportations of airport workers and others aimed at intimidating workers born abroad.

The demand for equal rights for all workers—regardless of their legal status—helps to point the road forward to overcome the divisions promoted by the capitalist rulers. It opens up the chance to see our brothers and sisters from other countries as part of the working class and as indispensable allies in a common struggle.

Irish leader says 'no' to summons

Continued from Page 16

attack a peaceful representative group and inflict serious injury with a view to undermining" the negotiations.

Despite these efforts, Irish republicans continue to press forward with their fight. An event in Dublin April 13 was attended by 2,500 people, predominantly families of republicans who had died in the fight to overturn British rule over the last 30 years.

Sinn Fein leader Martin McGuinness told participants that "nationalist people are up on their feet like they have never been up on their feet before; they are confident, they are assertive, and they know where they are going. And the reason they have that confidence is because of the leadership provided by young men and women who were ready to stand up and say 'we are not prepared to accept second class citizenship in our country.' So our message to the British government and the unionists is that those days are gone and they are never coming back." Unionists are supporters of British rule in northern Ireland.

Meanwhile, in England and Scotland supporters of the fight to end British rule are holding marches May 5 in Glasgow, May 25 in London, and June 8 in Edinburgh.

Crisis of French bourgeois parties

Continued from Page 8

levied on working farmers to pay for their supposed pollution of the environment.

Another source of electoral support for Le Pen has been the unemployed and workers on part-time or temporary contracts. Estimates are that some 30 percent of all unemployed people and 25 percent of employed workers voted for Le Pen. Many in the latter category are on temporary contracts called "interim," which have become extremely important in many French factories. Interim workers have no union rights and can have their contracts terminated without cause. Unemployment has remained at or above the 2 million mark for 20 years and the number of "interimaires" has mushroomed.

New assaults being prepared

Chirac has been using his supposed "tidal wave of support" to prepare new attacks on the working class.

The president has called on all the conservative parties to dissolve into a single party under the direct control of the president. There would be a single list of conservative candidates in the legislative elections and all candidates would pledge to be part of the same parliamentary caucus, voting according to the president's dictates.

"We need Jacques Chirac," said Alain Juppé following a planning meeting for the new party, "to restore the authority of the state and effective political action...against a state-oriented and undisciplined culture that has developed over recent years. We must free businesses by lowering their taxes.... Finally, we need Chirac to ensure our European engagements and the international influence of our country."

Chirac says his government would adopt "a new social and economic policy," the first step of which would be easing the restrictions of the 35-hour workweek and the "reform of the retirement system" through measures such as raising the retirement age and reducing benefits. In a recent television interview, Chirac said he would accept strikes only in "exceptional circumstances" and proposed adopting an obligatory "minimum service" in the case of strikes in public services such as railroads and other forms of public transportation and health care.

Chirac says he would reduce state income by 30 billion euros, largely by reducing the social taxes paid by employers that cover the retirement fund, public health care, unemployment insurance, and family benefit plans. He would increase public spending by 20 billion euros for the police and the army. The difference would be made up by a "budgetary redeployment"—that is, by taking money from other items such as education.

Protest votes

Millions of people voted for small centrist parties in addition to the National Front. Not only did the two fascist parties get close to 20 percent of the vote, but three parties that call themselves Trotskyist, seen by a layer of working people as being more militant than the Communist and Socialist parties, received almost 3 million votes, or 10.44 percent of the total vote—three times that of the French Communist Party.

Arlette Laguiller, the candidate of Lutte Ouvrière (Workers Struggle), received 1.6 million votes, 5.72 percent of the total. She has refused to support a vote for Chirac, calling on voters to cast a blank ballot in the second round.

The candidate of the Ligue Commmuniste Révolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist League) received 4.25 percent of the vote. After a week of vacillating and contradictory statements, the party's central committee met and decided by a large majority to call for a vote for Chirac, casting it as a vote "against Le Pen." The press and radio have given prominence to the statement, pointing out that Arlette Laguiller is now the only candidate who refuses to call for a vote for the bourgeois candidate, Chirac.

The French Communist Party (PCF), part of the governing coalition for the last five years, received only 3.37 percent of the vote.

Socialists lose teacher support

For the first time in recent memory, the Socialist Party did not receive a majority vote amongst teachers, one of their traditional bastions of support. Many abstained while others voted for parties such as the Greens. During its five years in office, the Plural Left government has attacked the national education system through major budgetary cutbacks, provoking wave after wave of strikes and protest actions. Claude Allègre, the Education Minister and member of the Socialist Party, was forced to resign from the government by such actions.

Similar austerity measures in the state-run health-care system produced a wave of strikes and demonstrations by hospital workers, another traditional stronghold of SP support.

Nat London in Paris contributed to this article.

Ned Turman: 'He died fighting for democracy'

Printed below is an excerpt from *Fighting Racism in World War II* by C.L.R. James, George Breitman, Edgar Keemer and others. This is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for May. The item quoted is titled "The Case of Pvt. Ned Turman: He Died Fighting for Democracy." Written by Albert Parker, it originally appeared in the Aug. 23, 1941, issue of the *Militant*. Copyright © 1980 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY ALBERT PARKER

Ned Turman, Negro draftee, died like a hero, fighting for democracy. He did not have a hero's burial, but he joined the long list of fighters for Negro freedom and equality who were not afraid to risk everything, even their lives, in the struggle against oppression.

Like thousands of other young Negroes, Ned Turman was drafted into the United States Army and told he would be given military training to prepare him to help save the world for democracy.

But once he got into the army, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, he found that the democracy he was being trained to defend was not supposed to include him.

He found that as a Negro he did not have the same rights and standing that other soldiers had. He found that he was not good enough to sleep in the same barracks that white soldiers used. He was not allowed to eat in the same mess hall. He could not drink soda in the same post exchange. He was forbidden to play checkers in the same recreation hall.

He was good enough to serve as cannon fodder like white soldiers, but not together with them. He was segregated from the whites, shunted off on the side. He saw that there were practically no Negro officers, and none of these few could command white soldiers, while most of his own commanding officers were white. He saw only a handful of Negro military police. He saw that most of the MPs were deliberately recruited from among the most backward, prejudiced, southern whites—men who were accustomed to treating Negroes as so much dirt.

There is no question that he, like the thousands of other Negro draftees, resented the way Negroes were being treated. In civilian life, Jim Crow is unbearable enough. But when he was being trained to die for democracy, he must have thought to himself many times that he would like to have a little of it himself, that he might just as soon die fighting for it here as anywhere else.

August 6 was payday for the men in Ned Turman's regiment, Battery C, Seventy-sixth Coast Artillery. With many others, he went to town that night, to "celebrate" in Fayetteville, to go to a Jim Crow movie house, to walk around and see the sights in the windows. When Turman returned to the bus later that night, he was perfectly sober. Witnesses of what followed, who knew him, reported this to newspapermen from the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the *Afro-American*.

Turman entered the bus and sat down near the front. The bus driver refused to start back to the fort because he claimed that some of the men, colored and white, had been drinking and were too boisterous. He demanded MPs and the soldiers didn't like this.

They argued with him until seven or eight MPs showed up. They entered the bus and told the men to shut up. One of them, Pvt. Mack C. Poole, continued to talk and the MPs began to savagely beat him over the head with their clubs. "It looked like the whole side of his head was caved in," one of the soldiers said later.

Ned Turman spoke up, said that Poole was in need of hospitalization, that he should be taken care of."Hospital, hell!" said the MP sergeant, E.L. Hargraves of Texas. "I'm going to take him to jail."

Evidently Turman repeated that he thought Poole needed medical attention. "Talking back" is what they call it in the South when a Negro tries to say something to a cracker.

Hargraves told him to shut up and struck him roughly on the shoulder. Turman threw up his hands to ward off the blow. In the South such an act is unpardonable. Crackers don't like Negroes to lift their hands to a white man, even in self-defense.

New York City rally called by the March on Washington movement in 1942 to protest the execution of Odell Waller, a Black sharecropper in Virginia who was victim of a frame-up and legal lynching that year. *Fighting Racism in World War II* tells the story of fight for Black rights in the army, factories, and on the streets.

Hargraves began to club him over the head. At the same time an MP outside the bus began to strike at him through an open window. And the other MPs advanced to do their share.

Suddenly Turman broke away and produced a revolver. The *Pittsburgh Courier* reports that he cried out:"I'm going to break up you MPs beating us colored soldiers!"

Those were his last words. He began shooting. Hargraves was killed, two other MPs wounded. When Turman's gun was empty, an MP who entered the bus from the back shot him dead.

A night of terror followed. All the five thousand Negroes at Fort Bragg were rounded up, cursed, beaten, and driven by MPs armed with sawed-off shotguns out of the camp to another nine miles away.

All friends of equality for the Negro people will honor the bravery of Ned Turman and defend his action against his Jim Crow defamers. But at the same time they must realize that while bravery and self-sacrifice are necessary in the struggle against discrimination and segregation, they are not enough.

Jim Crowism cannot be overthrown by individual acts, justified though these acts of protest may be. One man may be able to inspire others, but only a mass movement will actually destroy racial discrimination. And to do it, a mass movement must have the proper program.

This program must be based on unity of Negro and white workers in struggle against the creator of Jim Crowism, the system of capitalism itself that is also responsible for war and fascism and unemployment. To achieve this unity, it must fight for full social, economic, and political equality for the Negro people. It must also demand military training under control of the workers themselves to put an end to the Jim Crow practices now employed by the officer caste.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

May BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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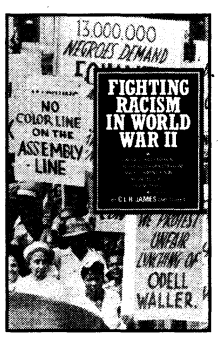

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— *LETTERS*

Cuban revolutionaries

A few weeks ago the *Militant* ran an appeal to its readers to write to the five Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in U.S. jails. I sent a brief letter of solidarity to each of them, following which I received personal responses within a matter of a couple weeks. It was obvious from the response that getting mail is extremely important for them, both to remind the prison authorities that these brothers have supporters on the outside, and to boost their morale and that of their friends and families.
Mindy Brudno
Troy, New York

April 20 action

I liked your article on the April 20 demonstrations in Washington and San Francisco, but I don't understand why I did not see any articles in the *Militant* leading up to the demonstrations and urging people to mobilize for them. These demonstrations were very important given the war footing of the Democratic and Republican parties and their complete and tight control of the media.

They helped create a little more space for us to organize and take advantage of the new radicalization that many are seeing on the campuses, high schools, communities, and work places around the country and, therefore, warranted more mention by the *Militant*.
Joe Lombardo
Albany, New York

U.S.-backed coup?

I read Maurice Williams's article on Venezuela this morning and have to ask...what evidence do you have of the U.S. backing this coup? I know the U.S. doesn't like Chávez. He has been a disaster from the outset. But I really do not see any evidence that the U.S. somehow backed the action taken by the generals.

The accusations are made but not backed up by any facts.

I'm curious...can you shed some light on this? Hard evidence, not rhetorical theory.
E. A.
by e-mail

Editor's note: Williams reported the public statements of support for the military coup by U.S. president Bush and White House spokespeople, as well as the fact that top U.S. officials collaborated with leaders of the short-lived regime both before and during the events. The U.S. government, along with many big-business newspapers, backed the coup from the start, even though they never called it a coup.

L.A. airport protest

There are a few points I want to add to the *Militant*'s coverage of the March 28 action at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) to protest a series of INS raids at Terminal 1. The protest was ringed by police, in uniform and plain clothes, as well as federal police. The fact that more than a few of the several hundred marchers were undocumented, including an immigrant without "papers" who began the news conference, underscored the courage of these demonstrators.

It should be noted LAX, like other U.S. airports, remains militarized. The breadth, discipline, and security of the union-based protest offered adequate protection for these workers, including a contingent of *jornaleros*—day laborers who contract their services at area hardware and building supply stores.

The most powerful chant was raised by a vocal contingent of Janitors for Justice, members of the Service Employees International Union, who have won widespread support for their inspiring and victorious struggles for union organization here. Led by a union member with a bullhorn, they continuously chant "*la clase obrera no tiene frontera* (The working class has no border)."

The protest had a positive impact on many of my co-workers in the International Association of Machinists, especially those who are immigrants from Mexico, El Salvador, and other Latin American countries, who saw coverage of the demonstration in the media.
Jon Hillson
Inglewood, California

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

THE MILITANT

Irish leader declines U.S. summons

BY PETE WILLSON

DUNDEE, Scotland—Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams told a Belfast press conference on April 23 that he had declined a summons to testify the following day before a committee of the U.S. Congress.

Sinn Fein is the party leading the fight to unify Ireland and end British rule in its northern part. According to the *Financial Times* Adams was to be questioned about "what three IRA [Irish Republican Army] members were doing last summer in Colombia." The three have been charged with teaching bomb-making to opponents of the pro-imperialist regime in Colombia and are being held in jail waiting trial. Washington and London assert the IRA and Sinn Fein are two wings of the same organization, a claim denied by both groups.

In a letter to Henry Hyde, chair of the House International Relations Committee that directed Adams to appear before it, the Sinn Fein leader said he was "particularly concerned at the way anti–peace process elements in Britain and Ireland have seized upon the hearings to damage the peace process itself. I also have serious concerns about the arrest of three Irish citizens in Colombia and the way these arrests are being brought into a wider agenda in that region."

At the Belfast press conference Adams said that he thought the committee hearings were "essentially about the relationship between the U.S.A. and Colombia." Such matters, he argued, were "for the governments of these two countries." He explained that Irish republicans "have no desire to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries."

Confirmation that these hearings were being used by Washington to deal a blow to Irish republicans and interfere in the sovereignty of Colombia came when, on the day Adams was to have testified, a report was released by the House committee titled, "Summary of investigation of IRA links to FARC Narco-Terrorists in Colombia."

Militant/Roy Inglee

Part of the 40,000-strong crowd attending a march on the 30th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, Feb. 3, 2002, in Derry, Northern Ireland. At an April 13 event in Dublin, Sinn Fein leader Martin McGuinness said that "nationalist people are up on their feet like they have never been before." Protests have recently occurred against arrest and beating of Peter Caraher, a leader of the South Armagh Farmers and Residents Committee.

The report, which received prominent coverage in the capitalist media in the United States and Britain, alleges that 15 IRA members have traveled to Colombia over the last four years to train members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The report charges the IRA with being "part of a global terror network in Colombia, training members of the guerrilla group FARC alongside Iranian and Cuban officials."

The committee took testimony from Gen. Fernando Tapias, commander of the Colombian Armed Forces, who claimed he knew of seven IRA members "involved in training FARC."

Responding to these allegations, Adams explained that the three men "have become pawns in a much bigger game," and added that the report "vindicates the view of the men's solicitors that the hearing itself could be prejudicial to their possibility of getting a fair trial."

'Blatant electioneering'

Along with this move in the United States, Adams was also summoned to appear before the Irish Republic's Dail (parliament) foreign affairs committee to answer questions about the "relationship between Sinn Fein and 'international terrorism,'" according to the Irish republican newspaper *An Phoblacht.* In declining to attend, Adams charged that the committee's request "may be an attempt to use the proceedings of this committee for blatant electioneering and to pursue a domestic party political agenda." A general election has been called for the Irish republic for May 17. The London *Times* observed that Sinn Fein may well increase the number of seats it holds from one to six in the voting.

In his letter Adams asked if the foreign affairs committee had "ever discussed RUC and British Intelligence Services operational links with loyalist death squads." The RUC is the British-run Royal Ulster Constabulary police force in Northern Ireland.

The Sinn Fein leader challenged the committee over whether or not it had ever discussed the massacre, known as Bloody Sunday, of 14 civil rights marchers by British troops in 1972, as well as the involvement of British forces in bombings by pro-British loyalists in 1974 which killed 33 people. "Have you ever invited the British government to meet the committee on these matters?" Adams asked.

Campaign of disinformation

Meanwhile, Sinn Fein member of parliament Pat Doherty, referring to negotiations with London, warned of "a concerted effort to scupper the entire peace process." The Irish movement is facing a "massive scale of disinformation, inspired leaks, rumors, and downright lies," he said.

The Irish Republican Army has also rejected allegations leveled against it over the past weeks of organizing a break-in at the Special Branch headquarters in Castlereagh, having a hit list of leading Conservative Party politicians, and buying arms last year from Russia.

This offensive against Irish freedom fighters has also been used as a smoke screen by the British rulers to step up raids and arrests aimed more broadly at opponents of British rule. Peter Caraher, a leader of the South Armagh Farmers and Residents Committee, was one such victim. Over the last months he has been in the forefront of protests calling for the removal of British military bases in his area. Caraher was arrested after British forces smashed their way into his home April 18. Along with Jim Cleary and Philip O'Rourke, he was forced into a helicopter and taken to an interrogation center at Crossmaglen.

According to *An Phoblacht*, after Caraher was forced to the ground a cop at the jail stood on his head, "inflicting cuts to his scalp. He then placed his boot behind Caraher's ear and twisted it round, causing a gash that required seven stitches."

In an April 28 press release, the South Armagh Farmers and Residents Committee condemned the arrests and treatment of the men, which, they said, were "designed to

Continued on page 14

Naval base workers in Scotland fight job cuts

BY CAROL BALL

HELENSBURGH, Scotland—Marching behind a banner reading "No job cuts for profit" and led by two pipers, 400 workers and their families at the Clyde Naval Base marched through this small town on the River Clyde near Glasgow April 12. That day 1,000 Ministry of Defence (MoD) non-industrial staff at the base were staging a one-day strike. The walkout was supported by the majority of the 2,000 industrial workers who either stayed at home or refused to cross picket lines.

The trade unionists were protesting the decision by the government, announced March 25, that it will cut 750 job cuts at bases across the United Kingdom and contract out 3,000 more job to private companies. The bulk of the jobs cuts are at the Clyde base. Others affected are Portsmouth and Devonport in Plymouth, both on the south coast of England. The Clyde base houses Britain's fleet of nuclear missile submarines and has a civilian workforce of nearly 3,000, some 1,735 of which are slated to be contracted out. Workers at the Portsmouth and Devonport bases have also decided to hold a strike ballot.

"I can't remember a similar action," said one worker who stopped to talk to *Militant* reporters with his wife, a chef at Faslane. He said he could not give his name as he is subject to the Official Secrets Act. "All the industrial unions walked out at 10:30 a.m. in our support, and they're having a ballot on industrial action soon. The march had a great reception," he said. "We're trying to get the MoD to change its mind. This is just about cutting costs."

Another worker said union members plan to begin a work-to-rule campaign next week. "The main issue is that we don't want any compulsory redundancies," she said. "We're also worried it will have an effect on wages and pensions."

Jody Friels, an administration worker, said, "It's disgusting how people are being treated.... Whole families don't know if they are going to have a job or not."

The unionists have good reason for their concerns. Babcock Naval Services, the company taking over the contracts at the Clyde bases, has been running Rosyth dockyard in Fife for nearly 15 years. The company cut 233 jobs there in 1999 and 360 last year following the loss of contracts.

The strike and march follow a campaign by the unions that included mass meetings and protests in December at Devonport and in Portsmouth the following month. In February a delegation of employees from all four bases traveled to London to hand in a petition against the expected privatization. Workers at Portsmouth and on the Clyde took part in hour-long walkouts in early March to raise awareness of their problem.

The government called the announcement an essential modernizing move. "We have a smaller fleet than we used to have—with lesser requirements for maintenance," said a Minister of Defence spokeswoman. Armed Forces minister Adam Ingram said the changes would save more than £300 million [£1=US$1.46] over the next five years, which would be used in the "front line" of defense.

The day after the action, union leaders held talks with Defence officials.

Locked-out cablemakers in New Zealand win raise

BY ANNALUCIA VERMUNT

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand—Cablemakers at the General Cable factory won their pay dispute after being locked out for 10 days by the company. On April 9 workers rejected a 2 percent pay offer plus a one-time signing bonus by the company and threatened to ban overtime and stage rolling stoppages. Workers were demanding a 4 percent raise.

The company responded by locking out the 250 workers, members of the New Zealand Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union. The bosses sent the union a letter stating the workers would remain locked out until they accepted the company's pay offer.

Defending the company's actions, the human resources manager said wages at the plant are in "the upper quartile for the market and [we] are simply trying to manage the trend away from that." Responding to company claims that workers average NZ$46,000 income a year with superannuation (government pension) and overtime, one worker told the *Press* he would not be on the picket line if he earned NZ$46,000 (NZ$1 = US 45 cents).

In face of the lockout, workers set up a picket line outside the factory gates as General Cable continued to send out cable. A picket told this reporter that one freight company refused to cross the line but others were coming in to move the cable.

The company made a second offer of a 2.6 percent pay hike to the union April 17 but this was rejected by an even greater majority than the original offer, and the lockout continued.

Two days later the bosses came forward with a third offer of 2.75 percent pay rise now, another 1.25 percent increase in nine months, and a NZ$320 one-time payment. Workers approved this contract proposal.

Militant/Annalucia Vermunt

Workers at General Cable walk the picket line

Annalucia Vermunt is a member of the Meat Workers Union in Christchurch.